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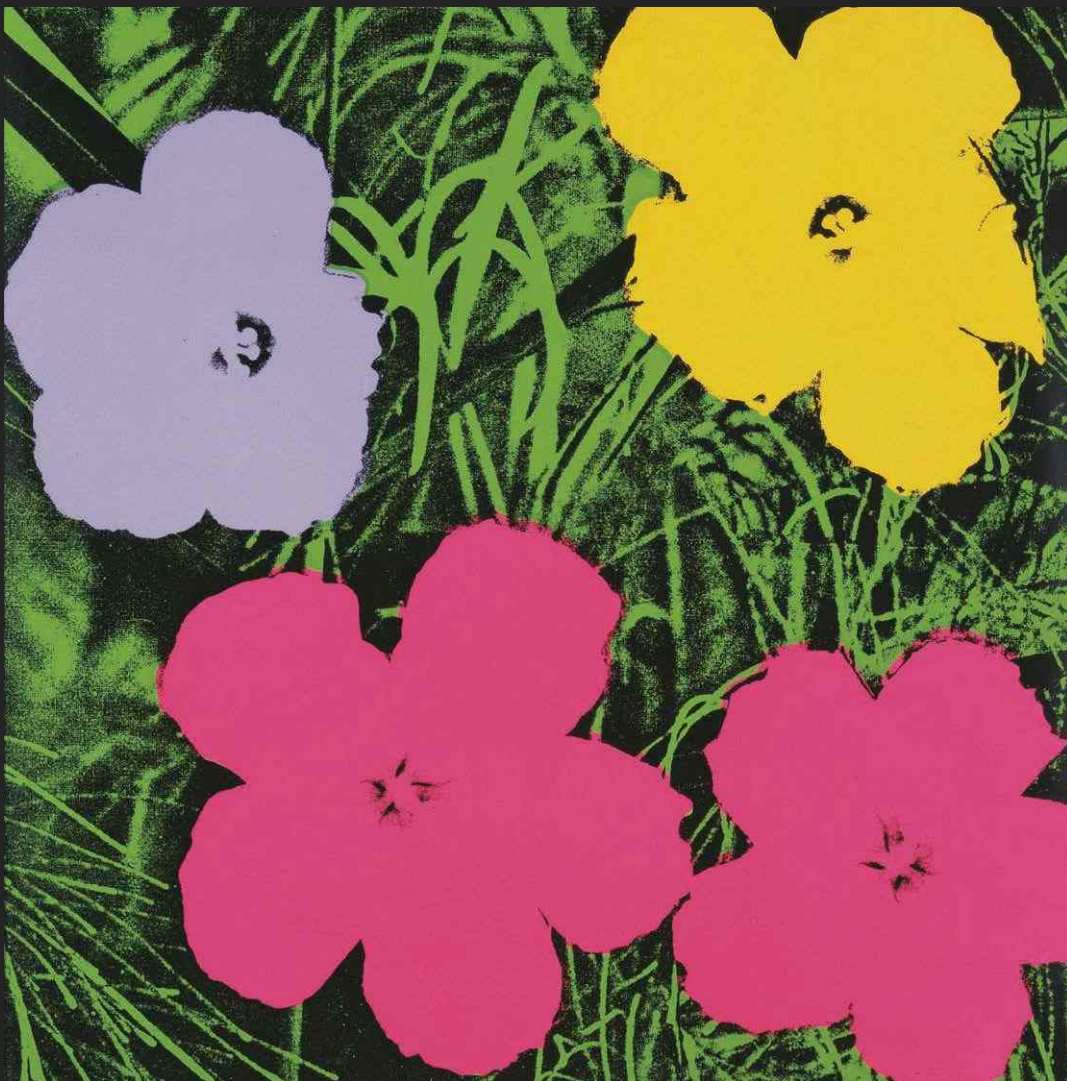


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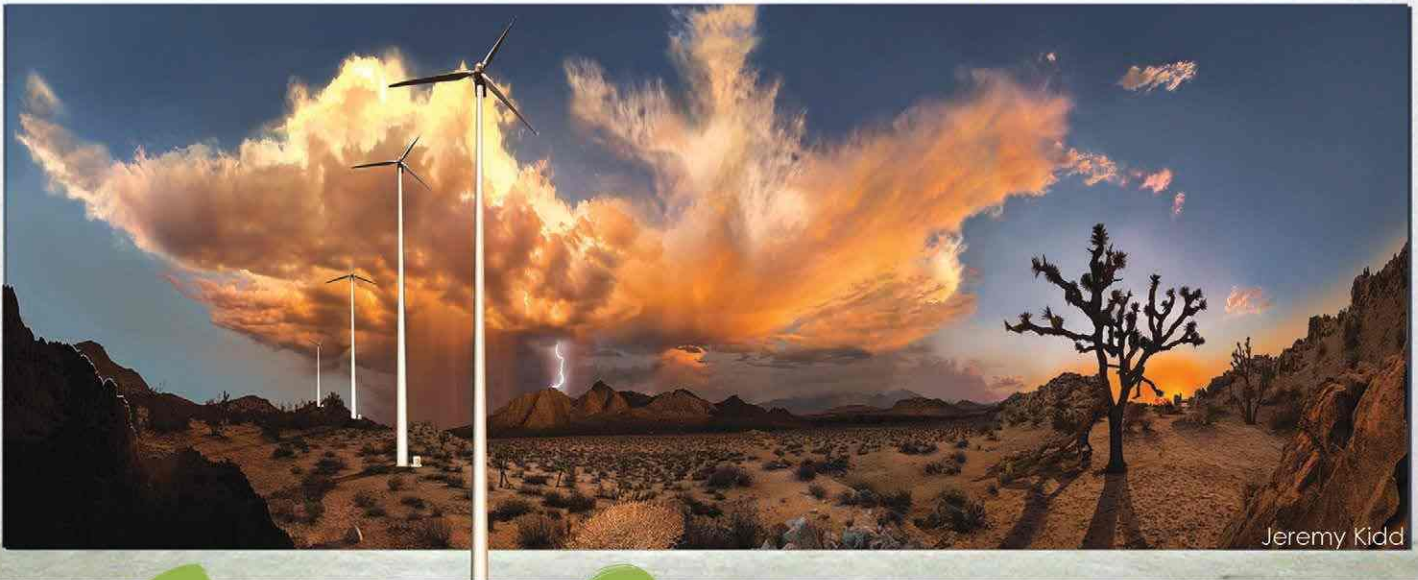


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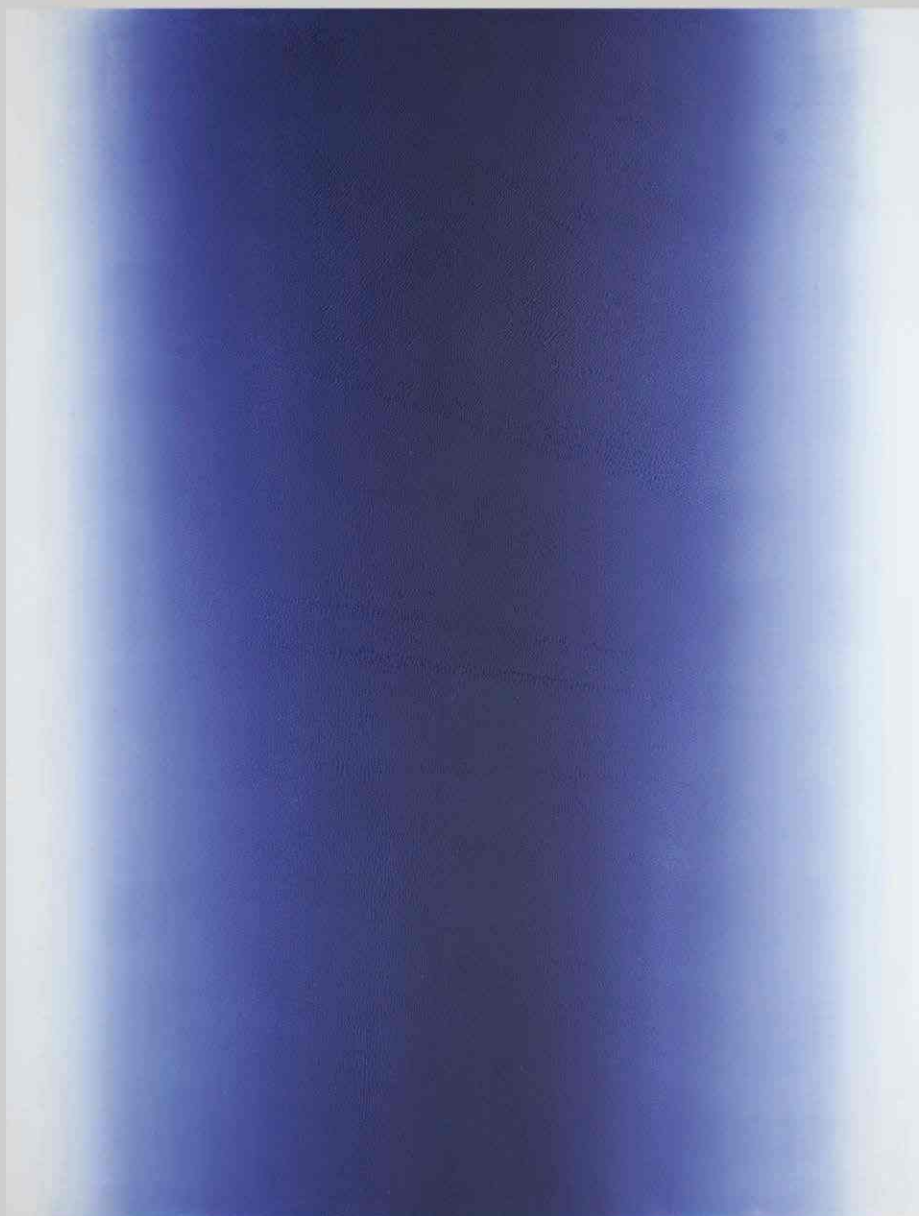
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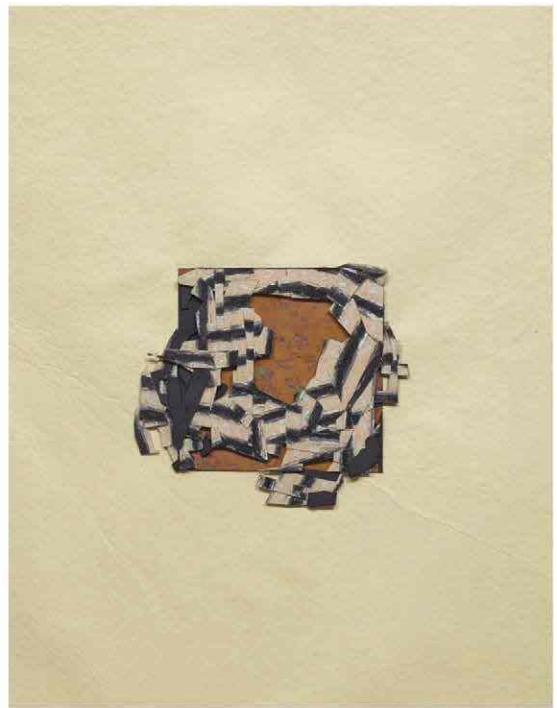
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Frances Lerner, *Syzygy*, 2016,  
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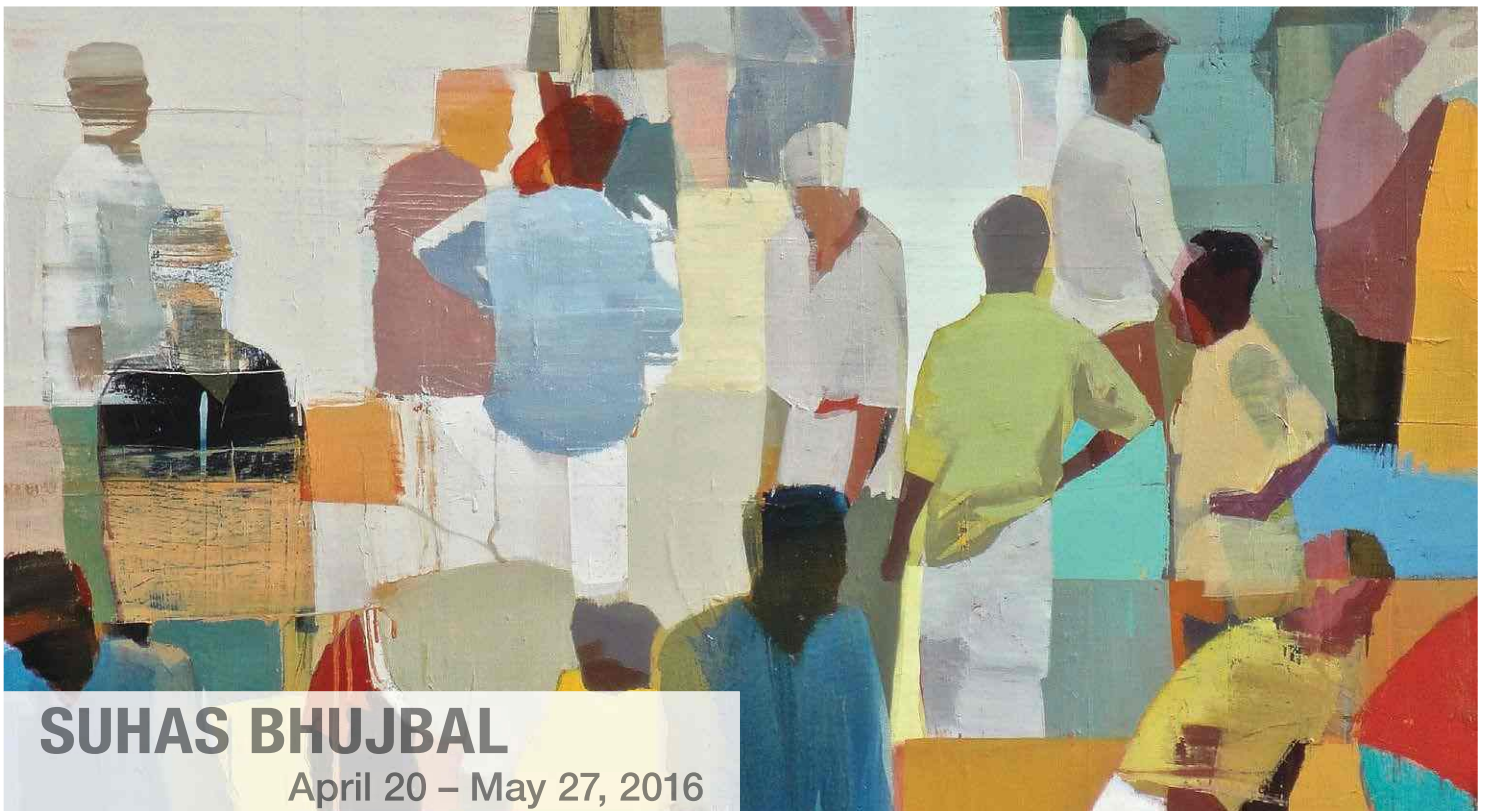
*Wishing Well* (detail) oil on panel 72" x 72"

# JEFFREY PALLADINI

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# SUHAS BHUJBAL

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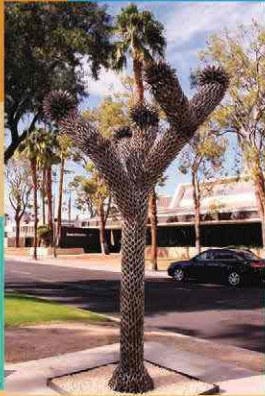
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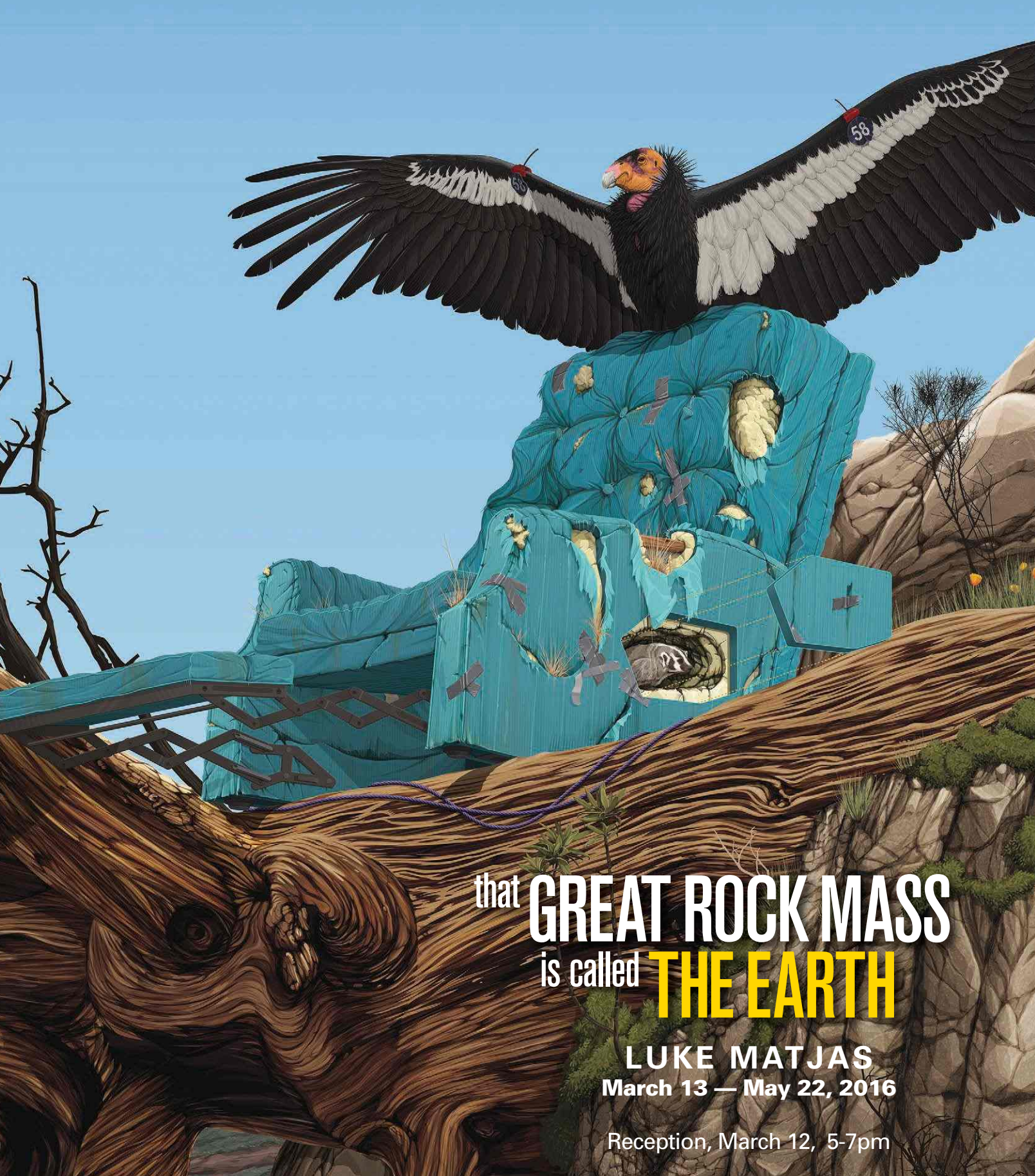
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Contemporary ceramics. 21st century ceramics. However you phrase it, it still feels a tad subversive. Perhaps that's because of ceramics' age. Leaving out cave painting (which has frankly gone out of vogue the last few centuries and is rarely taught in graduate programs), ceramics remains the most venerable of art mediums still in use. Thus, modern adherents of the medium have always had to work all the harder to dispel the aura of mustiness or functionality (or, gasp, Craft!) that stubbornly clung to it. One got the sense the other, younger mediums were just slightly embarrassed by the way ceramics kept hanging around, like some cousin from the Old Country, who was genial and good with their hands, who served delicious soups and stews, but still spoke with a subtle accent, and who wasn't always welcomed to the party when the trendy insiders were invited over. "We'll be having Absolut, and artisan cheeses and – oh Ceramics! You're here, too? You brought a bowl? Oh, great. Put it over there."

Well I hate to break it to you, but ceramics is now the hip one in the room. It's lost some weight and has a whole new look, and in fact, is crazy promiscuous with all the other mediums. That's right: after how many thousands of years, ceramics is finally cutting loose. Maybe even going a little crazy. Perhaps it's just a middle-age thing. After all, it was just over fifty years ago that Peter Voulkos had his solo show at LACMA (April 1965), and nearly fifty (November 1966) that John Mason opened his; aptly, both shows were titled "Sculpture." It was also in 1966 (July) that Ken Price exhibited at LACMA, in a two-person show with Robert Irwin. While Price's work in many ways laid the egg for the abstract sculptural medium of today, in its embryonic form, as it grew to break free of its vessel-like shell, Mason, too, made an indelible mark. His big *Red X* of 1966, a blockish crimson 'X' form standing nearly 5 by 5 feet, which was subsequently bought by LACMA and which remains on view, streaked and cracking, but defiantly monolithic, seems in retrospect to boldly declare "You Are Here" on the map of ceramic history, marking the time and place (California in the mid-'60s) that the medium came into its own.

Of course, the very word "clay" implies a certain flexibility, and today's clay is nothing if not adaptable. Beyond the hybrid crossovers with diverse mediums (and technologies), increasingly it is being looked at anew by conceptual artists who are more interested in what the medium can do than in adapting its traditions. Yet whatever its associations, clay remains a resolutely tactile, physical medium. You shape it with your hands, engage it with your body. So perhaps in its way, today's mini-clay-resurgence is a reaction to the digital, virtual, online 'space' in which we ever more frequently spend (waste?) our time. (Click here to move on to the next item in our ceramics Top Twenty list! Number 17 will shock you!). With this issue, we look at ceramics in a variety of ways, soliciting thoughts on the state of the medium from several leading ceramic artists and educators. We also review the Scripps Ceramic Annual (its 72nd), spotlight the NCECA conference in Kansas City (its 50th), and profile Seattle's George Rodriguez and LA's Julia Haft-Candell, who are each putting their own singular mark on this singularly mutable medium. FWIW, there are still other, excellent ceramic shows in LA that opened after this issue was assigned, among them the bountiful sculptural bouquets of David Hicks at Edward Cella, and a career survey of ceramic pioneer Ken Price to inaugurate LA's new Parrasch Heijnen Gallery. The sense of almost biological abundance and fecundity in these works is reflective of the overall state of the art. As venerable, and earthbound, as it is, today the medium of clay seems to be pushing forward in a hundred different directions, while embracing its sexy new hybrid identity as the new normal. If only the rest of us could age with that much flair.

—GEORGE MELROD

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## cover



"Glow," 2013  
**Rebecca Campbell**  
OIL ON CANVAS, 65" x 90"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUSAN AND PETER LIZOTTE, THE ARTIST AND LA LOUVER

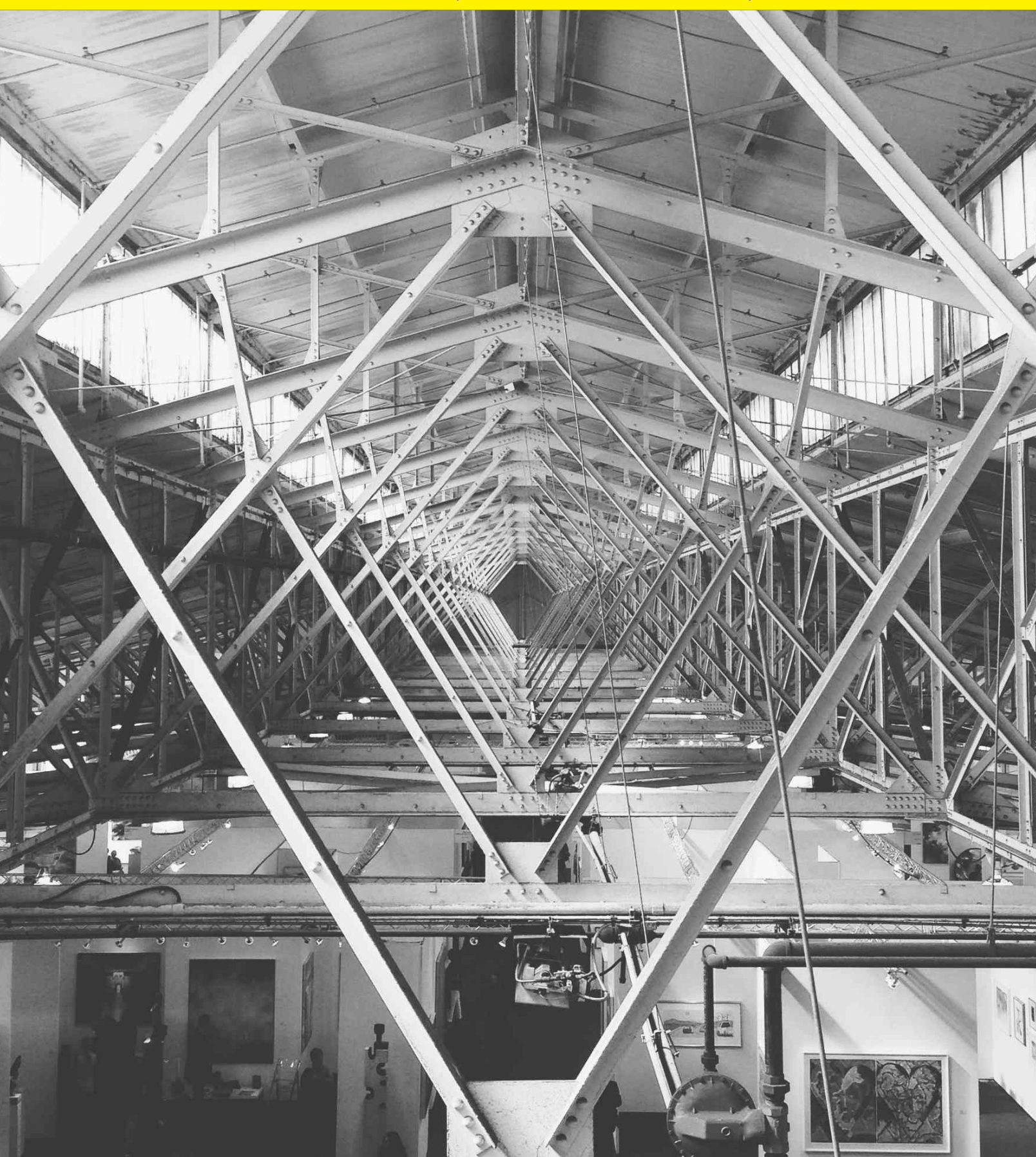


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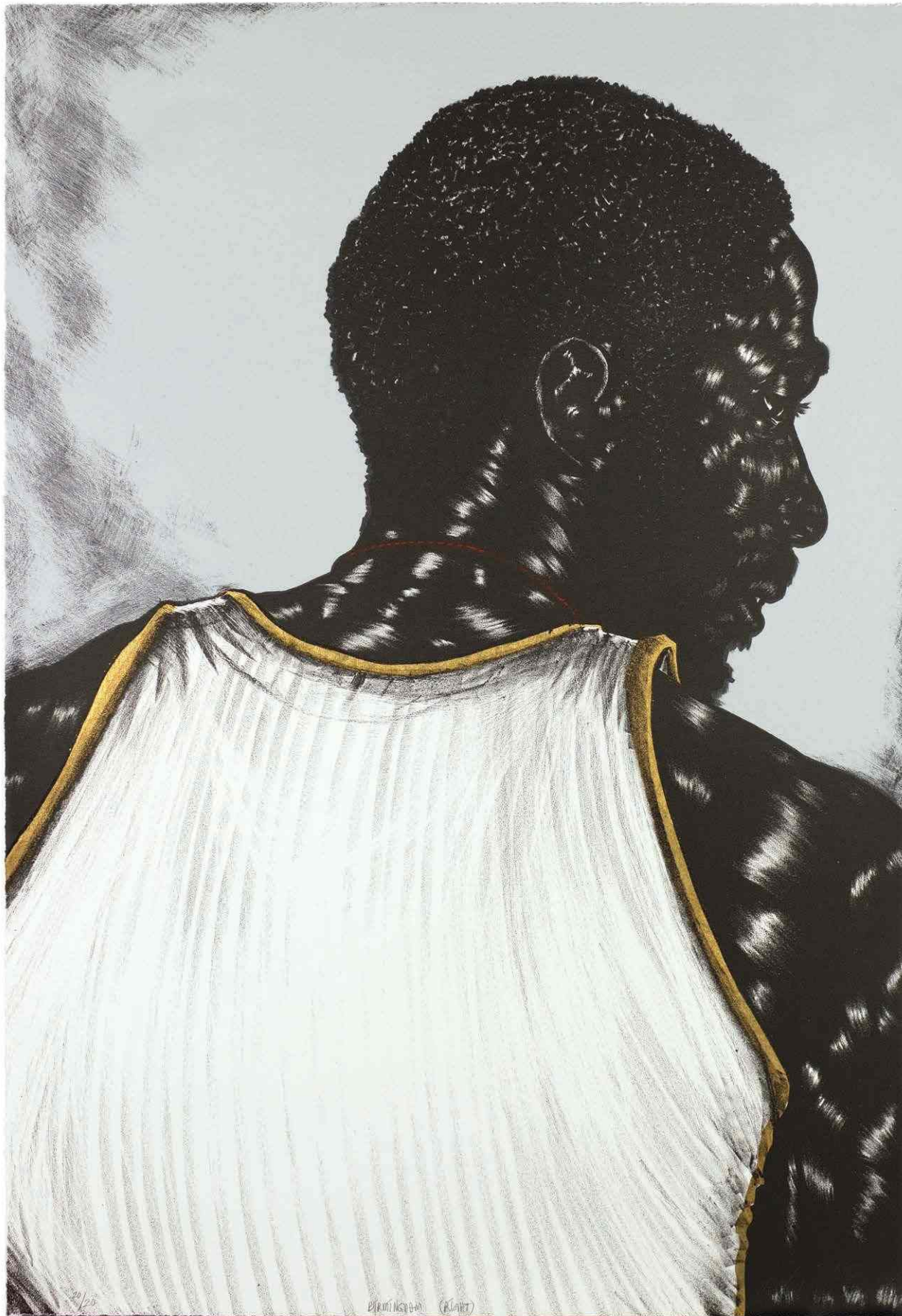
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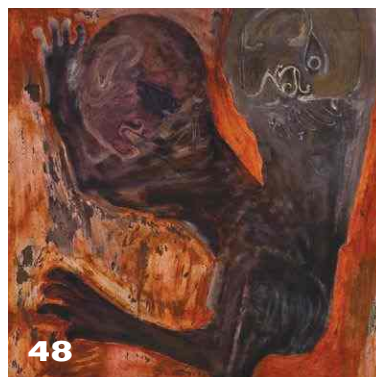
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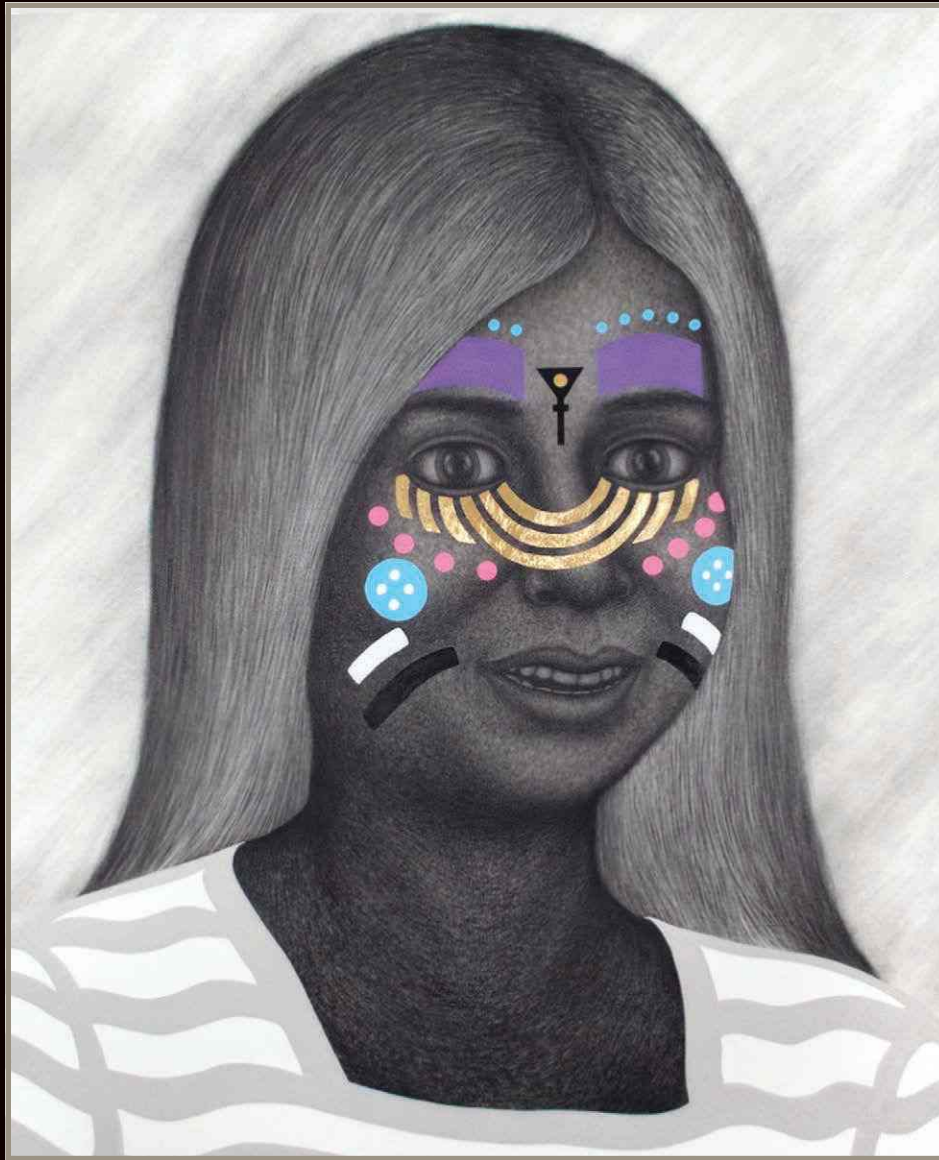
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PHOTO: COURTESY LA LOUVER, VENICE, CA

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LACQUER ON MASONITE  
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"PRIDE STORM," 2015, **Shannon Goff**  
GLAZED CERAMICS, 16" x 18" x 15"  
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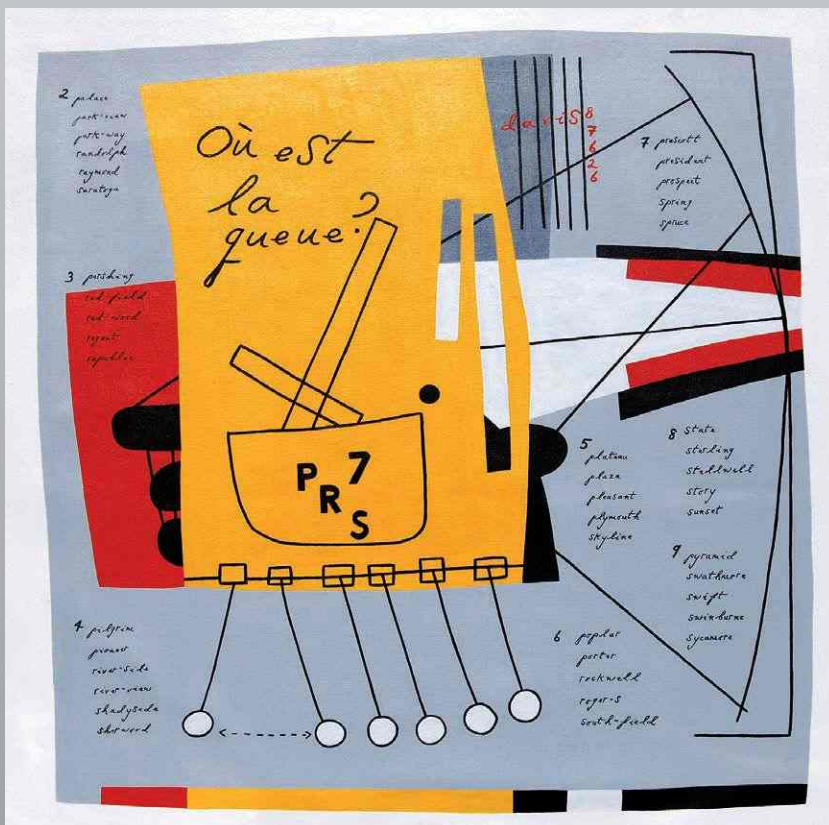




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**"Beyond the Object: The 72nd Scripps Ceramic Annual"  
at Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College**

If you don't follow ceramics, you've probably never seen the Scripps Ceramic Annual. But to a fan, it's an engaging showcase, like an idiosyncratic ceramics version of an NBA All-Star Game: you get to watch known and less-known figures strut their stuff, as unlikely teammates playing off each other. However, the Annual is not about consensus, instead soliciting distinct subjective visions, from a roster of guest curators, while finding new angles into the practice of this ever-evolving medium. This year's version (through April 3), curated by Susan Beiner, associate professor of the Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts in Tempe, Arizona, explored the dialogue between three-dimensional objecthood and two-dimensional drawing. While that might seem to suggest traditional terrain, the selection was in fact bracingly contemporary, offering a gamut of approaches demonstrating not only ceramics' brazen promiscuity with other art forms, but also with new forms of technology and modes of expressing visual information. If one were to judge the show merely on the diversity of its aesthetic languages, on a scale of 1 to 10 it would probably rate an 11. Still, it felt like an anxious exhibition, in a savvy way: pushing boundaries physically, while also edging into jittery psychological territory. Veering from miniscule to monumental, from fragmentary to frenetic, it seemed aptly reflective of the seductive-yet-disjointed post-post-modern landscape in which we all uneasily reside.

The show's premise is particularly emphatic for those artists whose drawing and ceramic styles seem superficially at odds, like Andrew Casto (of Manhattan, Kansas). Casto's ceramic works merge organic and geometric forms to suggest fibrous coral stems or shards of mineral crystals, gilded with blobby golden nuggets, like cysts, and lush patches of sky blue or bubble-gum pink; his two-dimensional works, by contrast, are stark black smears of roofing tar and other materials on plywood, as if he were channeling both Adrian Saxe and Richard Serra, as his own private Jekyll and Hyde. But seen together, they reveal their raw, almost corrosive texture and reflective distressed state. Conversely, for Lauren Gallaspy (of Helena, Montana), both

sculptures and drawings clearly flow from the same hand and mind. Her misshapen, headlike forms, adorned with delicate imagery and topped with gloppy shreds, evoke a similar unnerving mood as her allegorical, highly sculptural ink-on-vellum drawings. Both exude a palpable air of melancholy and mortality, drawing you into their mysterious narratives like dark, cryptic storybooks. LA-based Oona Gardner's ceramic wall units flirt with two-dimensional relief even as they mutate into found object medleys, while her drawings, derived from a similar fascination with abstraction (and, no doubt, 1970s design), mutate inward in swirling vivid colors. Meanwhile, LA artist Julia Haft-Candell (who curated last year's Ceramic Annual and is profiled in this issue) seems to meld the act of drawing and ceramic sculpture in her fragmentary, knot-like, wall-mounted work, which has been carved out to reveal its underglaze in a jauntily austere black-and-white grid pattern. Staking out the surface between two and three dimensions, it calls to mind an imperfect puzzle of a girl's bow, or a snake, or a pretzel (which is, in fact, its name).

Some of the most striking works flaunt the medium's adaptivity through the use of new technologies. The contributions by Eugene, Oregon artist Brian Gillis seem especially unlikely. His architectonic drawing of a "pirate radio antenna" of blue pencil and gold leaf on vellum is echoed by a 3D version of said antenna, mounted high up on the wall in geometric, diagonal mock-functionality. His biggest statement is his smallest: a miniature (white) portrait bust of abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass, made of "nanomilled ceramic," standing all of .1875 inches tall. Social commentary aside, they're the sort of works that cause one to exclaim: "Ceramics can do *that*!?" Kingston, New York-based artist Bryan Czibesz likewise explicitly embraces technology, playing off his mediums' hand-made expectations via effigies of monumental columns and statues made of hand-built and 3D printed porcelain, that look like molded vermicelli. His scrawly 78-inch long drawing of hand-and-CNC-drawn primary colored ink on acetate is oddly unsettling: where does the hand end and the machine begin? By contrast, Amanda Small (of Toronto, Ontario) makes works that clearly reference science and technology while clinging to their crafted tactility, whether through spindly volumetric forms or organic pigmented abstractions set beneath illuminated domes. They feel like private cosmologies or biology displays, co-opting the rigid lexicon of science toward poetic effect.

Two of the more dramatic, and wryly subversive, participants also seem to draw from the placid terrain of still life, and the vessel. Del Harrow (Fort Collins, Colorado) works in a lexicon that neatly blends modularity and consumerism. His installation includes an entrance wall, complete with faux potted plant, and a tabletop gathering of egg-like spheres and vessels, as one wormlike cousin rises in phallic alertness on the floor nearby. At its center he sets a carved wooden column resembling a raised middle finger. Hailing from Deer Isle, Maine, Paul Sacaridiz creates colorful 3D armatures with odd groupings of cryptic vessels or linear starbursts and twisty little forms that evoke astrophysics diagrams assembled via Home Depot and De Stijl, integrating ceramics with such humdrum materials as plywood, plaster, powder-coated aluminum, and household clamps. Set out on their scaffolds, they suggest nifty DIY displays from some garage museum, mapped out fragments of Big Ideas that are only hinted at: a new genre of Atomic Still Life.

In all these works, the use of ceramic objects or materials as constituent parts of larger implied systems positions ceramics, not as a closed world with its own inbred set of traditions, but as a uniquely pliant, ductile element that can play a vital role a wide variety of formal interactions, amidst a spectrum of hybrid forms and practices. It is that very open-endedness, perhaps, that makes this eternally evolving medium so adaptable, and so appealing.

—GEORGE MELROD



INSTALLATION VIEW 2016 SCRIPPS CERAMIC ANNUAL



## LOS ANGELES

### Philip Argent: "Misaligned" at Shoshana Wayne Gallery

Rectangles of various height, weight and states of completion run across the canvas like Tetris pieces. The black lines are each encased by a careful application of orange dots that illuminate the geometric forms so that they mimic circuitry, while their sequence is determined by a riddle of binary code. In "Misaligned," Santa Barbara-based artist Philip Argent explores the cacophony of digital noise and transmission encountered when viewing static objects in the contemporary visual landscape. When viewing *Untitled (Endless Fences II)*, (2014), we are tempted to momentarily consider that the rectangles are QR codes containing hidden information that can only be revealed through the prism of a technological lens. A treatment of yellow paint dilutes the symmetry and recedes into the canvas like bleach and soon fades inside a fractured and irregular form. Like a topographic map, the splintered shape disrupts the placid pink and white background and severs the composition. The fracture begins at eye level so that when standing before the canvas there is an overwhelming feeling that if we apply the familiar gesture of "pinch" and "zoom," we can see beyond the single dimension of the painted surface and travel further inside the rabbit hole that Argent has created.

While there is a distinctive visual repetition present in the 15 acrylic works on canvas, each varies in dimension so that our eyes can never fully predict how the fractured pattern will change. Argent manages to create tension between the two layers—the first a meticulous background of cool turquoise, mellow blue, or subtle pink. The second element is the abrupt fracture that breaks into the canvas at various angles. In *Untitled (Sick Glass)*, (2014), we can more closely examine the subtle technique implemented by Argent's deft hand and can see that the two layers never touch, rather they appear stacked on top of each other. "Misaligned" is an exploration of the tension between the handmade gesture of the paintbrush against a cacophony of noise produced by digital transmission. Argent also points to a new form of abstraction, one where we can visualize the inner workings of a painting as if it were a mechanized matrix.

—A. MORET

## LOS ANGELES

### Steven Hull: "Never Again Sharpen Your Teeth On the Rope That Holds You So Safely to Shore" at Rosamund Felsen Gallery

Viewing his personal, collaborative, and curatorial practice along a single continuum of experiential encounters triggered by impressive objects, Steven Hull describes his new exhibition of painting and sculpture, "Never Again Sharpen Your Teeth on the Rope that Holds You So Safely to Shore," as "part sea-side carnival, part ocean voyage." But that descriptive is not necessary; long before the



"UNTITLED (SICK GLASS)," 2014, Philip Argent  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 72" x 56" x 1½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY SHOSHANA WAYNE GALLERY

incessant, eventually charming calliope music and soft yellow glow of the strings of deck-side lights set the mood, the vivid, feverish burlesquerie of the images themselves telegraphs what you're in for, as surely as the drifting twinkle and sugary promise of the pier down the beach. Soon, much like approaching the looming glow of an actual carnival, surreal fabulism and hints of a seedier underbelly present themselves, hiding in the shadows of the family-friendly veneer. Whether these shadowy places of sex and grift are cautionary and unsettling or beckoning and seductive is perhaps more a function of the viewer's disposition than the work itself. Mixing together the Picasso-esque graphic character to the black-and-white drawing-based works, with a little Gustonian flair in the color scheme and caricature, plus some post-Medieval cartoonishness in the more narrative works adds up to as much a Weimar kids show as a reamplification of early 20th century art history.

Major works like *I Don't Want to Go* (all works 2015), spanning over 10 by 7-and-a-half feet, and *With Your Hemlock on the Rocks* employ saturated colors and segmented allegories that do seem drawn from dockside lore. The oil and ink transfer on blue paper pieces have the schematic surface mottling of blueprints or grave-rubbings, but allow the focus on Hull's skill and jaunty edginess as a draftsman to take center stage. Three acrylic on wood and plastic sculptures all with metal wheels seem the most like artifacts but the dense, elaborate detail of their decorated surfaces can only be the work of an obsessive artist, not a tradesman. The

"I DON'T WANT TO GO," 2015  
Steven Hull  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 10' 5¼" x 94½"  
PHOTO: GRANT MUDFORD  
COURTESY ROSAMUND FELSEN GALLERY

wall works are all viewed with the sculptures in the room's foreground, engaging both the architecture and the viewer's body, but stopping short of an immersive distraction. Though sharing iconography and functioning in tandem, each work's gestalt is self-contained, with more than enough scenic detail, expressive nuance, and impressive impact to exist apart from context. The music never stops.

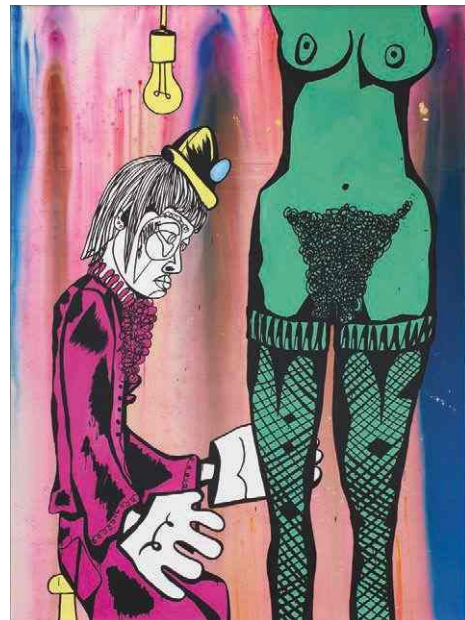
—SHANA NYS DAMBROT

## LOS ANGELES

### Bonita Helmer: "Observed" at George Billis Gallery

Trawling the cosmos for inspiration, Bonita Helmer produces abstract paintings that reflect the perpetual curiosity and tireless imagination of an explorer. She embraces a conceptual range from suggested space-scapes to renditions of sub-atomic worlds. Her subjects imply the stuff of stardust and evoke a scope beyond the solar system, even as they materialize out of the inner realm of the subconscious. Helmer's compositions are dominated by asymmetrical nebula-like forms which appear as if suspended on top of amorphous backgrounds, sometimes anchored by intersecting lines with unexpected angles, adding a deeper sense of perspective, a sort of order superimposed in relation to the mysterious forms and shapes hovering in the foregrounds. In a sense, her images are not technically abstract, as they are representational of matter and energy—the swirling and enigmatic components of the galaxy.

The work derives in part from the artist's study of physics and astronomy—a lifelong quest to probe the origins of the universe. Helmer is the only visual artist on the board of the Exploration Institute, a science-driven organization that launches expeditions on land, sea and in space. While rooted in science, borrowing from the realm of quantum mechanics, her work is a form of artistic hypothesis. The unknown is open to theoretical







"SUSPENSION II," 2015, **Bonita Helmer**  
ACRYLIC AND SPRAY PAINT ON CANVAS, 36" x 36"  
PHOTO: COURTESY GEORGE BILLIS GALLERY

conjecture. There's infinite latitude for the artistic supposition of subatomic, theoretical particles, which are virtually invisible. As the artist has observed, she has carte blanche to come up with visual renditions of these natural phenomena, seeing that even scientists don't know what they look like. Resembling continents drifting in uncharted waters, Helmer's nebula-like forms are multi-colored, often thick with milky applications of pigment and subtle nuance under layers peaking through. Using acrylic and spray paint, the artist achieves the effect of crusted cracking on some sections of the surface—like fissures on the face of the moon—creating striking visual contrast. Given the fact that the source material of Helmer's paintings is a marriage of science and the psyche, the exhibit might have been titled "Imagined," rather than "Observed." Viewed as a body of work, the paintings convey a mood of intrigue, and offer nuanced visions of enthralling hidden worlds.

—MEGAN ABRAHAMS

## LOS ANGELES

### Chris Ballantyne: "Transcendental Divide/Transitory Space" at Zevitas Marcus

A curious sense of dislocation permeates the works on view by Chris Ballantyne in the recent exhibition titled "Transcendental Divide/Transitory Space" at Zevitas Marcus. Just inside the front door to the gallery—a newer addition to La Cienega Blvd since this past fall—the entryway is freshly painted to depict an abstracted landscape as seen from a bird's eye point of view. The forms are simplified: the grass is a single shade of not-quite Kelly Green bisected with an arced gray highway curve, capped off with a solid Cornflower Blue sky. Once inside, the gallery presents hauntingly melancholic, almost

Hopper-esque, paintings in which signs of human life frequently abound in the form of houses, parking lots, billboards, pools, even a barge on the open sea, but the human figure itself is noticeably absent. The works are similarly reductive and the perspective is slightly askew, just enough to cause a bit of unease in viewing the variety of landscapes—natural, urban and sea—that Ballantyne puts forth. As a result, the paintings act as poignant reminders of the fragility of the human condition, touching topics as varied as political, environmental, financial or all of the above.

The Brooklyn-based artist is not heavy-handed in this endeavor; the stoicism of the compositions is often paired with off-kilter, dry-witted titles. *Ziggurat (Cul de Sac)* and *Over the Falls* (both 2015), among the largest works on view, each present what may at first seem to follow the familiar mantra of the real estate market: location, location, location. The prime position at the top of the hill carved into future housing plots, the space once occupied by the cella of the ziggurat now appears the future site of a tacky housing development. In the latter work, three isolated structures occupy an expansive desert vista, with one—a modernist-style residence—sits on the precipice of "the falls." The painting seems prescient; echoing the tragic nightly broadcast running concurrent with the exhibition documenting the plight of homes and apartments on the verge of similar fate in Pacifica, CA. "Transitory space," indeed, though hardly "transcendental" in consequence. An earlier painting titled *Parking Lot with Standing Water* (2014), presents a cacophony of parking spaces adjoining at impossibly acute

angles to navigate—a purgatory for evil and impatient drivers everywhere. A solitary structure, reminiscent of the once-familiar, now-obsolete Fotomats, sit awash in one of the parking lot puddles. As with the earlier works, this quick nod to the past points toward the unanticipated consequence of progress

—MOLLY ENHOLM

## LOS ANGELES

### Julian Wasser: "Duchamp In Pasadena Redux" at Robert Berman Gallery

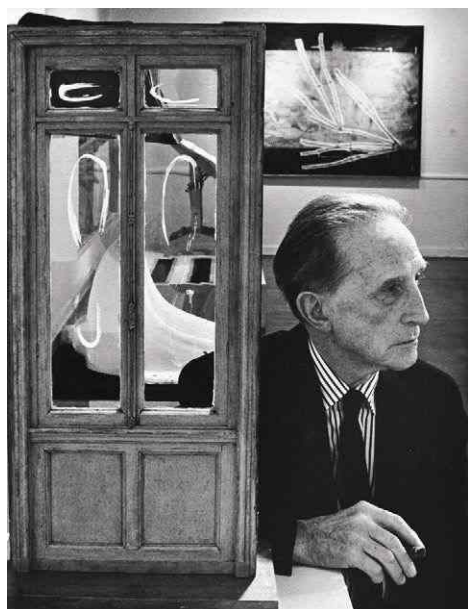
One of the most intriguing factors about appropriation art is the way it calls into question issues of authorship. So it seems only apt to go back to the source and apply those questions to the inventor of the "ready-made" himself, conceptual art pioneer Marcel Duchamp. Unsurprisingly, issues of authorship abound in the invigorating show at Robert Berman Gallery, "Duchamp in Pasadena Redux," which celebrates, and partially recreates, Duchamp's historic 1963 retrospective at the Pasadena Art Museum. Beyond its seemingly straightforward concept, the Berman Gallery's restaging essentially presents a hall of mirrors, offering multiple levels of appropriation spanning back over a century, to the conception of the works themselves.

The original Duchamp retrospective was the brainchild of famed LA curator Walter Hopps, who had co-founded the influential Ferus Gallery before moving to the Pasadena Art Museum, and in 1962 had curated the first major survey of Pop Art, "New Paintings of Common Objects." In bringing the iconoclastic conceptualist to Southern California for



"OVER THE FALLS," 2015, **Chris Ballantyne**  
ACRYLIC ON PANEL, 48" x 64"  
PHOTO: COURTESY ZEVITAS MARCUS





"DUCHAMP WITH DOOR SCULPTURE," DUCHAMP RETROSPECTIVE, PASADENA ART MUSEUM, 1963

**Julian Wasser**

VINTAGE GELATIN SILVER PRINT, 13½" x 10½"

PHOTO: COURTESY ROBERT BERMAN GALLERY

his retrospective, Hopps had once again presciently captured a signal moment in art history (all in his first year on the job). So in a sense, Hopps is an author of this show as much as anyone. Sent to document the exhibition's opening was young magazine photographer Julian Wasser, and it is Wasser's photographs that form the heart of this exhibition. Having Duchamp's retrospective in Southern California was not just a coup for the burgeoning LA art scene, but testimony to its vitality and coming-of-age, and Wasser's images capture that energy, as young artistic rebels like Andy Warhol, Dennis Hopper, Billy Al Bengston, Larry Bell, and Ed Ruscha all mingle memorably. Many of Wasser's photographs present moments that now seem iconic, from Duchamp posing rakishly beside his various works to the indelible image of the old artist playing chess with a voluptuous nude Eve Babitz (an event staged by Wasser; the story goes that Babitz was Hopps' mistress and had thus not been invited to the opening). Among other gems, the show presents the contact sheet for this series of images, as well as a trio of rare color prints.

But this show (called "Redux" as it is a restaging of a 2015 version seen in San Francisco) also included credible recreations of many of the original Duchamp works, including both paintings and the infamous readymades, most of them made by artist Gregg Gibbs. All were commissioned by gallerist Robert Berman, who is ultimately the Barnum behind this meticulous, highly entertaining Duchampian meta-museum.

—GEORGE MELROD

"ABSTRACT BROWSING," 2016, **Rafaël Rozendaal**

INSTALLATION VIEW

PHOTO: DON LEWIS

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND STEVE TURNER, LOS ANGELES

## LOS ANGELES

**Rafaël Rozendaal:**

**"Abstract Browsing" at Steve Turner**

"Abstract Browsing" is an extension for the Chrome browser that turns an ordinary web page into an abstract composition of bright colors. With the click of a button, any web page can be momentarily transformed, becoming a Mondrian-esque composition.

This ingenious extension, conceived of by this quintessential new media artist Rafaël Rozendaal, does not render the web page inert, but rather changes the interface and therefore the expectations. Rozendaal has infiltrated the space of the World Wide Web in other projects—making and selling numerous domain names as art pieces with the caveat that the collector keeps the web site indefinitely accessible, as well as creating haikus that read like tweets. Rozendaal is one of those rare artists who can flow easily between mediums and scales. While over 200 haikus appear as three lines of HTML type on his website, three (numbered 192, 89 and 110) become vinyl lettering on post-it note pink, yellow and blue walls, respectively. These read as existential fragments: "not here / not there / somewhere" is the text of *Haiku 89*. The three lines of *Haiku 192* are as follows: "i really want to / i know i shouldn't / i think i will" and 110 states: "what i should do / what i can do / what i will do." These texts are very much Rozendaal's modus operandi, as he does what he wants, in any medium he sees fit, among them websites, books, room-sized installations, lenticular paintings and public electronic billboards.

Not every artist would think to translate electronic websites into woven tapestries (pixels into stitches), yet Rozendaal seamlessly transforms one medium into another. This process changes the formal properties of the work, as well as access to it. While "Abstract Browsing" is a free extension, Rozendaal's tapestries are large-scale Jacquard weavings, commodities made to grace collectors' or museum walls. The compositions come from specific instances of websites including Twitter, Gmail, Tumblr, Instagram, IMDb and Pinterest. While Rozendaal says he looks for

unusual compositions—those an artist would not have made—the tapestries easily fit within the canon of abstract art. That they were created by an algorithm and commercially fabricated solidifies Rozendaal's role as a postmodern, post-internet artist—one who mines everything, looking for that perfect synthesis of form and content. Rozendaal's skill is in knowing what to make, not necessarily how to make it.

—JODY ZELLEN

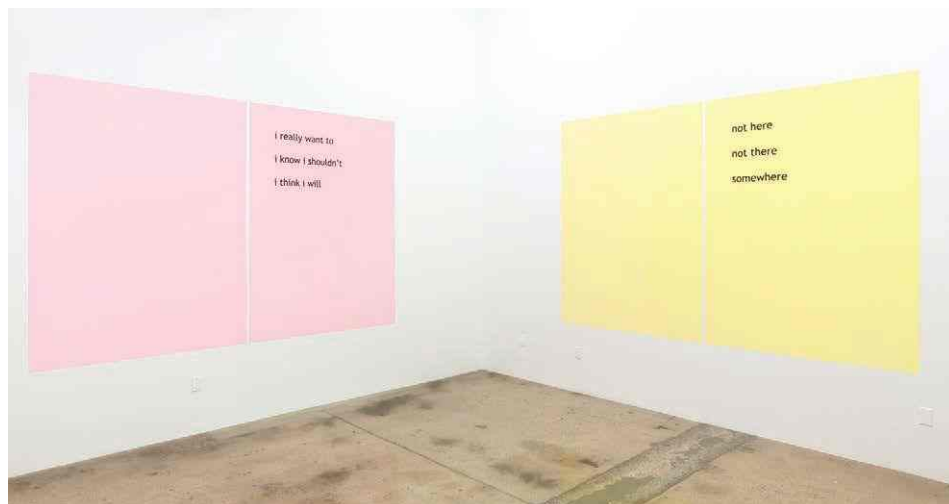
## SAN FRANCISCO

**Paul Mullins**

**at Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art**

Balzac's 1837 story, "The Unknown Masterpiece," recounted the comic tragedy of the fictitious painter, Frenhofer; for 10 years, in secret, he paints a figure, but manages only "a chaos of color" from which a girl's foot emerges. Cézanne famously admitted, "Frenhofer *c'est moi*," inaugurating the idea of the artist as existential and even absurd hero. Viewers unfamiliar with modern art's rejection of photographic reality may look at Paul Mullins' small mixed-media paintings as Frenhofer's traditional artist friends did. The small works on panel incorporating fragments of colored-pencil drawings based on magazine photos, and embedding them in swirling abstract brushstrokes, seem at first glance absurd, human anatomy suspended in painterly amber or aspic, but the more you peruse them, the more you see and feel.

Mullins' juxtaposition of powerful draftsmanship with its seemingly absurd subversion reflects his ambivalence toward growing up in Appalachian West Virginia, with its less-than-romantic (or chivalric, Old South) good-old-boy culture (nicely mocked in Will Ferrell's Nascar comedy, "Talladega Nights"). Mullins is both "enthusiastic and apprehensive about... the iconography plundered from the cheapest of cultural sources, and associated with ways of life that contemporary coastal Americans should *supposedly* regard as less successful, if not outright undesirable." He reconsiders the "popular images that powered the dreams of so many rural kids" of his generation from the viewpoint of "someone who has been looking at *Art*







"Swig," 2015, Paul Mullins  
COLORED PENCIL, ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON PANEL  
12" x 9"  
PHOTO: COURTESY MARK WOLFE CONTEMPORARY ART

[his italics]... for a lifetime." These muscle magazines (as I suppose), with their cars and babes, are hardly unique to "Southern Man," of course. The commercialization of sex and self-esteem is universal. Yet these small, generally high-key semi-abstractions—with their glimpses of beer cans and bottles, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, gesturing hands, flexed arms, bellies, eyes and lips—are strangely poetic and even powerful. *Puff, Cup, Skoal, Refresh, Cig, Nails, and Swig*, (all 2015) with their laconic Pop titles, make the banality of mass-market consumerism and the psychic wound of cultural dislocation, universally experienced in the modern world, aesthetically meaningful, like Dada photomontages and Rauschenberg's ghostly image transfers. We are all Sisyphus; Frenhofer, *c'est nous*.

—DEWITT CHENG

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Alan Ebnother: "twelve paintings" at George Lawson Gallery

Alan Ebnother is the kind of artist who lives and breathes painting, for whom the materials of oil and pigment, and the process of their manipulation, transcend an interest in creating something with a particular look, rather presenting a continual voyage of discovery. As a young painter, he was drawn to the work of artists Joseph Marioni and Phil Sims, members of the New York-based Radical Painting group, whose shared aesthetic focused on monochromatic canvases—also proposing the disengagement of the profession of painting from the myriad concerns of the broader art world. The older artists took Ebnother under

their wing, teaching him invaluable skills in handling pigment and oil mediums, learning to grind and mix his own colors.

Color, certainly, is Ebnother's passion. Earlier bodies of his work solely explored variations on the hue of green; while this particular chroma continues to receive significant attention, he has since branched out into the full spectrum of colors. His self-imposed "rules" for a painting supply a kind of moral structure, imbuing a sense of integrity to the work that gives it dignity and power. For his latest show at George Lawson, Ebnother presented "twelve paintings" each 25-inch square, made of oil and dry pigment on linen. Ebnother, who was originally from the Bay Area, now maintains studios near Santa Fe, New Mexico, and just outside of Leipzig, Germany. #15, September 12th, 2015 suggests foliage, slathered in short, energetic brushstrokes of a muted, creamy green like split pea soup. The thickly impastoed strokes set up a dynamic rhythm, while strong diagonals, often ending abruptly in feathery tails, draw the eye up and down the canvas. A pair of inverted 'V' shapes near the top edge describe a hairpin turn of the brush, a thick rim of paint just below the curve documenting the residue of this swift motion, like a ripple frozen in water. While thick paint encrusts most of the canvas, the linen ground appears between the thick patches, its coarse texture asserting its presence. Thin underpainting in cobalt blue and mauve flickers around the edges. In #6, June 1st, 2015 a color like wet clay, just faintly greenish, meets a variation with a faint pinkish-purple hue. Thick strokes in scabrous textures scuttle this way and that. Bright greens and blues peek through. A trick of afterimage may be at play, further complicating the chromatic complexity. Ebnother, a former ballet dancer, deftly engages the viewer in the rapt choreography of his committed gestures.

—BARBARA MORRIS

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Elena Dorfman: "Sublime: The LA River" at Modernism Inc.

Sometimes history has an interesting way of repeating itself. Layers of time leave marks and impressions on the landscape, carrying with it stories and visual cues that lapse or remain. The indelibility of these historical traces is documented in Elena Dorfman's series of photographs on view at Modernism. "Sublime: The LA River" features several large-scale works printed on metallic paper that imparts an eerie glow.

"#15, SEPTEMBER 12TH 2015"  
2015, Alan Ebnother  
OIL, PIGMENT, WAX ON LINEN  
25½" x 25½"

PHOTO: COURTESY GEORGE LAWSON GALLERY

The Los Angeles River was originally christened *El Río de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Ángeles de Porciúncula* by Franciscan explorers who descended upon indigenous Tongva land in 1769. The concrete channeling of the river as we know it today was initiated in 1938. Dorfman visited the river and took thousands of photographs, then layered them with historical archives to create acutely detailed and painterly collage. The layers contest the notion that photography "captures" moments or freezes time; here, time is stretched, and the history of a single location spans the years. The layers also impart a blurry quality that creates a sense of uncertainty. In true Transcendentalist fashion, much like the painters of the Hudson River School or of European Romanticism of the 1800s, Dorfman's landscapes conjure the deep-seated awe of confronting vast space.

In particular, *Sublime LA 8* and *10* place the viewer at water's edge, seemingly hovering just out of frame above a presumed embankment. Breathtakingly vivid color enhances each ripple in the water, and each branch on the foliage. Small clues of human presence remark upon the fragility of nature, such as white plastic grocery store bags tangled in the bramble, or a skeletal powerline rising above the trees. Human intervention with nature is especially pointed in series numbers 4 and 7, where Dorfman has utilized bridge underpasses to create bold geometric compositions. In each of these, the Brutalist-like black-and-gray concrete alongside ochre and olive toned plant-life is reflected in the water below. The mirroring in the reflections creates an enclosed feeling, emphasizing the domineering effects of colonialization and industry. Dorfman is most well-known for her documentation of cultural and sexual practices within marginalized and deviant social communities, including *Fandomania* which explores the participants of Cosplay, or *Still Lovers* featuring people who live with Real Dolls. In the last three years, she has been pursuing landscape. While the portraiture has its merits as historical archive of fringe societies, the land-





"SUBLIME LA 10," 2015, **Elena Dorfman**, PIGMENT PRINT ON METALLIC PAPER, 33½" x 69½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF MODERNISM INC.

scapes implore the viewer to look within themselves, rather than gaze at others.

—LEORA LUTZ

#### NEWPORT BEACH, CA

##### **R. Luke DuBois: "Now" at Orange County Museum of Art**

New York-based artist R. Luke DuBois is not only a master of the IT platforms of a wide range of media, including the Internet, music, performance, video and film, he has learned how to manipulate and combine these various media to create dizzying videos that address the inundation of images and sounds in contemporary society. Each piece in DuBois' first solo museum survey show on the West Coast is an amalgam of several media, and reminds us of just how disconcerting our world has become. "The final result," former OCMA curator Dan Cameron theorizes in the catalogue, "is not exactly pleasant, bordering on the painful."

The 76-minute video *Academy* (2006) shows the Best Pictures from 75 successive years of Academy Awards, with each full-length film compressed into a single minute; this art piece progresses from early black-and-white movies, through Technicolor, into recent fast-paced ones. The underlying purpose of the video is to demonstrate how filmmaking has changed over the decades, while presenting this progression in a way that watching all of these movies (in real time over 10 days) would not. "Just as visualization helps us to make sense of the 'facts' of our world," the artist explains in the catalogue, "art made with data lets us look critically at those 'facts.'" Yet the intense compression of the individual films often renders them as incomprehensible, and indistinguishable from each other. The 60-minute *(Pop) Icon: Britney* (2010), a similarly formatted film of split-second images of Spears, clearly addresses the star's public persona. As the wall label explains, the pop star has existed entirely within Auto-Tune and Photoshop, with all of her pictures and videos airbrushed to present a perfect icon, and with her "live" performances pre-recorded and lip-synced. This mesmerizing video trivializes the singer, presenting her to the world as the fake star that she really is.

*Acceptance* (2012), a high-definition video, is comprised of two screens, one of Obama, the other of Romney, with each giving his 2012 Presidential Candidate acceptance speech. Yet the words of their speeches are manipulated to periodically sound as though each candidate is mimicking the other. The



"ACADEMY," 2006, **R. Luke DuBois**  
DVD VIDEO, STEREO SOUND  
76 MINUTES; EDITION 5 OF 10, 1 AP  
PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND BITFORMS GALLERY

most illustrative piece in this show, reflecting our media-rich world, is *Sergey Brin and Larry Page* (2013). Here, two screens display the respective Google co-founders being interviewed, while moving Google text and image searches, collected in "real time," are superimposed over their faces.

—LIZ GOLDNER

#### SEATTLE

##### **Daphne Minkoff: "Highly Colored Space" at Linda Hodges Gallery**

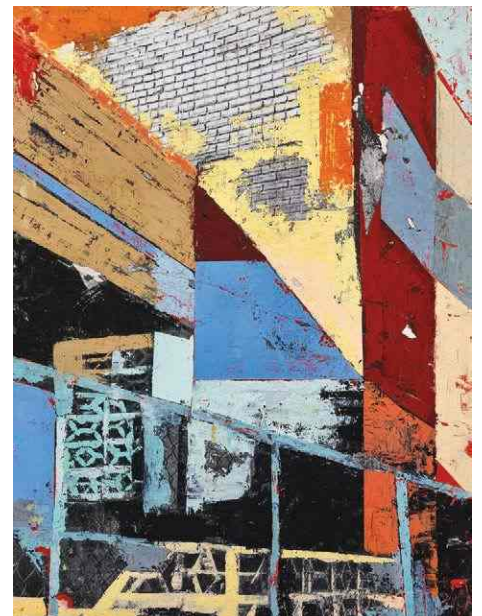
For her eighth solo show at Linda Hodges since 2003, Seattle artist and North Seattle College art professor Daphne Minkoff took an archaeological approach to depicting various locales in Seattle's Central District, a historically Jewish and African-American neighborhood that is rapidly undergoing transformation and gentrification. In fact, some of the structures she portrays in her small (18 by 24 inches) canvases of oil,

"REMNANT," 2015,  
**Daphne Minkoff**

COLLAGE, OIL ON BOARD, 24" x 18"  
PHOTO: COURTESY LINDA HODGES GALLERY

altered photographs, and mixed media have already been demolished. Seen on one level as an aesthetic rescue mission, "Highly Colored Space" is a documentation of vanishing urban spaces in the form of 32 paintings that memorialize doomed storefronts, houses, restaurants, roads and back yards. On another level, when de-contextualized, they operate as abstracted cityscapes in the tradition of Richard Diebenkorn, photographer Aaron Siskind and local painter Paul Havas. Minkoff begins each painting with her photographs, then paints over them, and scrapes (or "excavates") back into them to create the illusion of peeling paint, graffiti, and fading labels or signs.

*Blue Light* (all works 2015) reveals National Rifle Association graffiti on a wall while *Hardware* highlights the store's sign with its missing letters. Abandoned supermarket shopping carts (in *Nomads View 1* and *Nomads View 2*) and crumbling houses (*An Inner Strength Still Remains*) provide the outer limits of any explicit social commentary. Elsewhere, deteriorating sites become gentrified by Minkoff: appealingly colored, divided into color blocks, and far from any hint of detritus or decay. Of these, *Remnant*, *Think Blink View 2*, and *T-Docks View 1* are the most abstract and least troubled by the artist's concerned interventions. They put the more random scenes into a decorative space, perhaps undercutting the artist's program of identification, rescue, memory and protest. The brutal cropping of the original photos extends to the composition of the resulting mixed-media pictures. Older houses, as in *Broken Heart: I Want it Back* and *Deeply Rooted Foundation*, become picturesque rather than cautionary. The *T-Dock Views* (a popular Lake Washington inner-city swimming beach), along with *Offramp* and *Simplicity Brings Forgetfulness*, are the airiest, and most promising. They show open white and blue skies that are filled with rain about to fall on solitary constructions.







"UNTITLED #375", 2015, **Gabe Brown**  
WATERCOLOR, INK AND PENCIL ON PAPER, 30" X 22"  
PHOTO: COURTESY BUTTERS GALLERY

Minkoff's chronicle is selective in its choice of dwelling and community hangouts. Her treatment avoids any real anguish or rage, settling instead for colorful, wistful nostalgia, a feeling that no doubt will increase with time as the city's other neighborhoods are gradually replaced with unaffordable housing and economically upward-shifting demographics.

—MATTHEW KANGAS

## PORTLAND

### Gabe Brown: "Above Below" at Butters Gallery

Disjointed geometric motifs integrate seamlessly in Gabe Brown's fantastical compositions. Wave forms, geodes, trees, and painterly drips seem to vault, arc, and float in an illusory space hailing from the lineage of Surrealism. In a suite of oil-on-linen paintings over wood panel and a smaller set of mixed-media works on paper, the Kingston, New York-based artist combines diverse imagery into what she terms "inner landscapes" and "narrative vignettes." To be sure, these are not narratives in any traditional sense; while they do feature recurring symbols, there is no sense of characterization or time-driven plot. But the works do sketch a kind of visual story, albeit in broad strokes, akin to a fever-dream or psychedelic trip. In the paper piece *Untitled #328* (2013), honeycomb forms and geodes hover above a passage of blocked color, which appears to spray out the end of a funnel like a mysterious energy source. *Untitled #375*

(2015) incorporates watercolor, ink, and pencil in a serpentine composition of segmented ovals in myriad strata. The fancifully titled *Private Super-Nova* (2011) is a paean to looping waves of color à la Karin Davie, heaped upon one another. Atop these twisting gestural ribbons, balanced as if on a knife's edge, rests a cluster of multi-hued shapes, which in aggregate resembles a rough outline of a United States map.

A similar cluster of color-chunks clings together in an ominous, pink-hued sky in the abstracted landscape titled *Slipstream* (2013). Beneath the nucleated shapes lies a spartan hill dusted with burnt trees. Notably, the artist invests this scorched-earth tableau with the suggestion of hope and renewal, for just beneath the lonely tree stumps lies a network of green and lavender shapes that curve like a giant, subterranean laurel wreath. The wreath's deepest-reaching leaves extend like fallopian fimbriae toward a grouping of bright white rocks or crystals. At the two spots where the wreath touches the hillside's surface, white clouds spray into the sky, carrying, perhaps, a regenerative power from deep within the earth. And so from a seemingly whimsical grouping of shapes, Brown has conjured what might be viewed as a profound trajectory from environmental devastation to renaissance. Her paintings lend themselves to such allegorical interpretations, with their imagery drawn from the crossroads of the natural and the mystical. In her perspectiveless, self-consciously low-brow style, she composes romantic hymns to the organic world, with pagan undertones and transcendentalist overtones in haunting visual harmony.

—RICHARD SPEER

## SEATTLE

### Cable Griffith: "Sightings" at G. Gibson Gallery

Given a debut on the eve of the recent X-Files reboot, it was either prescience or a nod to the eternal, incorrigible human longing for things unseen that informed Cable Griffith's exhibit of nocturnal landscapes at G. Gibson Gallery. Dotted with bouquets of levitating, phosphorescent orbs and fledgling flocks of UFOs, the paintings of "Sightings" comprise a pleasant migration from Griffith's previous work, which has increasingly reduced landscapes to pixelated amalgamations of dashes and dots. With Griffith careening toward a unique pointillism that harkens simultaneously to Seurat and Minecraft, sometimes climaxing in a purely abstract, Morse codification of place, his work in "Sightings" dips back toward fully recognizable terrain, featuring the terrestrial stuff of trees and hills. For the series, Griffith draws from real-life reports of UFOs. The larger paintings on canvas—approaching Bierstadt proportions—are drenched in the murky blues of the Pacific Northwest.

In *Two Lights in the Woods* (both works cited, 2015), three fingers of a woodland creek cascade down moonlit moss, their froth comprising Griffith's signature neon dashes of laser-blue liquid. The tributaries converge and pool under the portent of a pulsing green and violet light. *3 triangle shaped white lights slowly moving together (after Bierstadt)* is a vast landscape at dusk, its heavy sky a layer cake of emerald, turquoise and graying greens that dissolve into purple shadow. A lone campfire provides the only spark of warm color. Pines crane their arrow-like tips, pointing to the heavens,



"TWO LIGHTS IN THE WOODS," 2015

**Cable Griffith**

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 54" X 72"

PHOTO: COURTESY G. GIBSON GALLERY



**"RE-ENVISIONED LANDSCAPE," 2015, Laura Truitt**  
OIL ON CANVAS, 20" x 15"

PHOTO: COURTESY WILLIAM HAVU GALLERY

where three UFOs hover in a patch of sky visible through a tangle of branches. A series of smaller acrylics on paper scale the paranormal to bite-size chunks; in contrast to the large paintings, they grid the gallery wall like pages torn from a picture book of Space Age mythology. Reports of sightings in places like the Pacific Northwest, Spain and Algeria are mapped out with geometric precision. Alien spacecraft plotted against the inky, gem-tone night skies vibrate.

Griffith's dalliance into UFO storytelling nested within the tradition of landscape painting doesn't just offer a painterly depiction of the universal—at times downright mad—yearning for something supernatural. By mythologizing the regional landscape in the era of regional tech glut, he offers a timely twist in the continuation of Modernist-era Northwest Mystics like Mark Tobey, Morris Graves and Kenneth Callahan. In a similar vein to their divination through mark making which found a basis in the natural world, by reducing his landscapes to tangled cuneiform abstractions, Griffith locates the sublime at a crossroads where nature, technology, and the imagination, all unexpectedly meet.

—AMANDA MANITACH

## DENVER

### Laura Truitt: "Re-Visions" at William Havu Gallery

Comprised of nearly 20 paintings and monotypes, Laura Truitt's "Re-Visions" featured a range of her sophisticated interpretations of the built environment set in nature. There are those with sketchy, if recognizable, imagery. Then, those that have been so thoroughly reworked as to seem be all but non-objective. Finally are those works representing discrete steps somewhere in between those two poles. Among the more representational Truitts is *Re-envisioned Landscape*, in which an under-construction industrial facility is set

in the shadow of the mountains. The structures she's inserted into the scenery are skeletal and incomplete, making them almost transparent in places. The success of the representational illusion owes much to the sweeping vista of a mountain range in the background; but mostly it's her insertion of those skeletal structures, done in linear perspective, which reinforces the illusion of three-dimensional space.

At the other end of her output are those pieces that seem at first to exemplify pure abstraction, though they actually represent the same subject as the more clearly representational ones—a structure set in nature. In the marvelous *Pile Heap Jumble Stack*, a riot of roughly rectilinear shapes have been set at diagonals defined by perspective outlines evocative of a scene that looks like there's been a demolition in the foreground with new construction in the background. The scene is merely suggested by the perspective lines that converge at the top center of the painting. To carry it out, Truitt uses a complex palette dominated by an array of oranges in shades from Hazmat to rust, accented by other shades including a pungent turquoise. The paint both honors and violates the margins established by the outlined shapes and as a result, the painting functions simultaneously as both an abstract work and a representational one.

Truitt lives and works in Fort Collins, which is also where she earned her MFA, at Colorado State University. Although Denver is the state's art center, Fort Collins has long had a significant contemporary scene as well. Like Denver, Fort Collins is going through an unprecedented building boom marked by the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new ones. The references to buildings going up and down are easy to discern in Truitt's works. In her artist statement she alludes to this, writing "my work explores structures between life and death; construction... and destruction". So in a way, her pieces present telling documents of their place and time.

—MICHAEL PAGLIA

## HOUSTON

### Edward Lane McCartney: "Media Whore: the persistence of making" at Hooks-Epstein Galleries

The title of this show refers to the fleeting nature of social media in today's culture. McCartney is not the "Media Whore" referred to in the title; that would be people like the Kardashians, who use social media platforms to live in the public eye. In fact, McCartney is just the opposite—he believes in the "persistence of making," the fact that

### "URSUS MARITIMUS PETROLEUM ACCLIMATE," 2015 Edward Lane McCartney

RUBBER, KRATON 1652 ALONG WITH SOLVENTS,  
PLASTICIZERS, 1,1,1 - TRICHLOROETHANE, VM&P  
NAPHTHA, TOLUENE, HEXANE, ETC.  
12" x 12" x 9"

PHOTO: COURTESY HOOKS-EPSTEIN GALLERIES

when he makes a work of art, he creates something that persists in the world, unlike Tweets, Facebook posts, and YouTube videos. He organizes the 56 collages and assemblages in the show into nine categories. "Assemblages in Blue" have been described as Louise Nevelson meets Yves Klein. Small but powerful, these wall pieces are constructed from scraps of wood arranged in abstract patterns and painted "Yves Klein Blue." The category "Paper Cuts" includes a series of abstract colored-paper cutouts layered to reveal the colors below. *The Rhythm of Moonlight* (2015) is a surreal collage made from antique book illustrations depicting a tsunami wreaking havoc, as figures run about wailing, boats land on top of rocks, and fish swim in the sky.

For "Cartoneros," McCartney divides discarded boxes into geometric sections and fills them with cardboard stacked and arranged in creative ways. The series is named for people in Buenos Aires who make a meager living collecting cardboard from the street and selling it. Like the Cartoneros, McCartney uses discarded materials, describing his work as being "crafted from the chaos of the superfluous." He traces his obsessive need to compartmentalize back to frequent trips to the British Museum when he was a child. Attention to detail is paramount, and everything is expertly assembled. McCartney reminisces about the past in *I Don't Need You to Cut My Meat, Homage to the Post-Feminist American Male* (2015), using his mother's silver carving set to question traditional gender roles: the fork has been transformed into a female figure and the knife a male. In other works, collected seashells become a Victorian-inspired collage, and a teddy bear appears to have been tarred and feathered. McCartney's transformation of materials provokes new ways of seeing; as he explores color and perception, he asks us to consider how we construct our reality with material possessions, and how we relate to the world around us.

—DONNA TENNANT

## SANTA FE

### Susan York: "Carbon" at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

Susan York's sculptures and drawings fold the three-dimensional into two and back







"TILTED COLUMN," 2008, Susan York

SOLID GRAPHITE, 70" x 14" x 15"

COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

PHOTO: INSIGHT FOTO INC. 2016, ©GEORGIA O'KEEFFE MUSEUM

again. Her medium is graphite and geometry; the effect is pristine and personal. Her solid graphite columns float an inch or so above the ground, and are scaled roughly in a 1:1 relationship to the human body. York's highly polished pieces recall Donald Judd's Minimalism in their forms, but are decidedly Post-Minimalist in their sensibility. The surfaces deny entry, like the self-contained monolith of "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968). Still, graphite is organic, as non-threatening as a grade-school pencil. It absorbs and reflects light; it is warm and cool, compelling and confounding. To add to the paradoxical nature of her columns, York skews their geometry just enough that the viewer may not realize consciously that something about them is slightly off. The columns cause a shiver of vertigo in the viewer. We're not quite sure we're supposed to be feeling this sensation, but it brings with it a secret, illicit thrill. Her drawings do something similar: It feels as if the geometric shapes would, if they weren't under glass, float right off the page.

It's not enough, however, to describe the artist's work here, because another player has made all the difference. Curator Carolyn Kastner put this show together with a flawless vision. She used her deep familiarity with the museum's galleries, and with the Santa Fe-based artist's work, as well as her encyclopedic understanding of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings, installing York's works in the museum's main galleries, in dialogue with O'Keeffe's. The result is a perfect installation. Even the museum's architecture is brought into play; the softly rounded adobe surfaces suggested by Richard Gluckman's renovation in the late 1990s are reflected in O'Keeffe's nearly abstract *My Last Door*, a painting from 1954. In turn, York's *Tilted Column* is lit in such a way that it reflects the blacks, grays, and whites of O'Keeffe's painting of her beloved patio door.

"G6," 2016, Thomas Roth

MIXED MEDIA, 18" x 18"

PHOTO: COURTESY TANSEY CONTEMPORARY

The last gallery belongs to York, and she shines. In it, the 1915 Suprematist exhibition "0.10" in St. Petersburg is revived, thanks to Kastner's knowledge of art history, and the installation is effectively Malevichian. Two of York's graphite sculptures hang high in the corners, as Russian icons, and Malevich's *Black Square*, once did. It doesn't hurt that York and Kastner know how to work every angle in the room while deflecting attention from their own talents and intelligence—the work is just that good.

—KATHRYN M DAVIS

## SANTA FE

### Thomas Roth: "White" at Tansey Contemporary

We live in a material world, and mixed-media artist Thomas Roth is a material guy. He's interested in what happens at the edges of empiricism, when things fall apart, and centers cease to hold. His work comments on the accumulation of objects and items in our post-industrial lifestyles, and the scale of the systems of mass production consumed with producing consumables. Where Warhol gave people what they wanted in the form of Marilyn and Elvis, Roth provides a perfectly warped picnic of plastic products. Some of the best of the nearly all white works in his current show are wrought from (spastic) plastic forks, and sliced Styrofoam cups. Even during these deeply jaded days there is something slightly audacious about making your art out of disposables. Not that everybody from Duchamp to Tuttle hasn't already, but as Roth's exhibition goes to show, the fine line between what lands in the landfill, and what wears well on the wall is exactly the point.

Roth wins the prized golden hot-glue-gun for his gestural abstractions accomplished in this largely under-explored medium, and in the even stickier substance of silicon caulk. In a signature Rothian turn, the stuff that other artists use to glue their work together, the unacknowledged, invisible in-betweens, become both subject and object of his practice. The large chevron diptych (titled G2 and G3)



is an especially excellent example. Moon craters, rings of Saturn, planetary topographies, and other interstellar associations orbit the small square piece *G6*, composed primarily of the aforementioned sliced Styrofoam beverage containers. Transformation of materials, and ultimately, the transformation of our material culture, are the key concepts for grasping the significance of Roth's process. Like Lee Bontecou, Roth produces work in an idiosyncratic visual language that is entirely his own. The most radical alteration, the show's masterpiece, takes the form of a large vertical relief, that protrudes nearly a foot off the wall, composed primarily of melted plastic picnic forks with an overlay of plastic sheeting, also subjected to heating, melting and tearing. Reminiscent of a giant papery insect nest, or some natural mineral



"ORACLE," 2015, Yoshua Okón

VIDEO STILL

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PRODUCED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

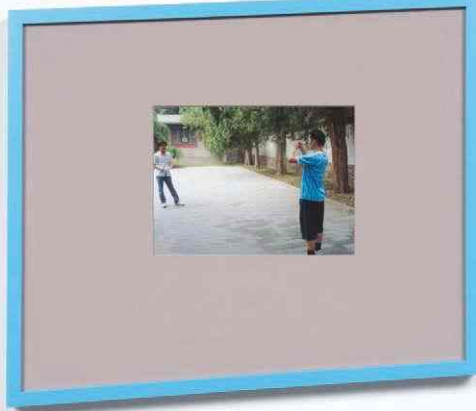
accretion on a cave wall, the work asks viewers to look through the holes and tears in the overlay to the twisted, nearly unrecognizable forks within. Evoking a strong sense of interiority, it affords wonderful moments of curious exploration and intimate discovery, which is really what art is all about, after all.

—JON CARVER

## SALT LAKE CITY

### Yoshua Okón: "Oracle" at Utah MOCA

It is impossible to anticipate what sort of shelf life a politically inspired piece of art will have. When Mexico City-based artist Yoshua Okón visited the border town of Oracle, Arizona, to ask members of the AZ Border Defenders to reenact their protest against the entrance of unaccompanied children into the US, the story of the Central American migrants was already being nudged aside by other news items. And by the time his resulting video piece "Oracle" opened at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (UMOCA) at the end of January, the issue had almost completely faded from collective and journalistic memory. Even so, Okón has captured a fragment of American culture that promises to retain its relevance for some time. In Okón's multi-channel video piece, the protesters are shown walking along a dirt road, bearing the Stars and Stripes and a "Don't



**"SUMMER PALACE 3 (SKY BLUE)"**

2007/2015, **Nicholas Frank**

INKJET PRINT ON EPSON ULTRA PREMIUM LUSTER  
ARCHIVAL 260GSM PAPER MOUNTED IN  
RISING MUSEUM BOARD

CUSTOM-DESIGNED AND CUT MAPLE FRAME, PAINTED  
BY THE ARTIST, GLAZED WITH UV FRAMING  
QUALITY PLEXIGLAS, 21½" x 24½"

PHOTO: COURTESY WESTERN EXHIBITIONS

Tread on Me" flag, as well as yellow placards that read "Stop the Invasion." Eventually three men from the group plant Old Glory among a pile of boulders. These shots are intermixed with clips of anti-immigrant placards, ants seen scurrying across a desert floor littered with spent shell casings, and shots of Hispanic youths facing a wall while chanting a modified version of "The Marine's Hymn." The emotional and visual core of the piece, however, ends up being the shots of a white pickup doing donuts around an island of sagebrush and cactus, shown both from the outside, where the truck spins round and round beneath a clear blue sky, and from inside, where a man of AARP age punctuates the soundtrack of his roaring engine with random pistol shots and an occasional "Yee-haw!" In one of the final clips, the driver is shown again, this time wielding an assault rifle as he spins the wheel and strings together phrases like "You mess with us and you're going to mess with fire," and "We love you, we welcome you, any race, creed, color, doesn't matter... but do it the right way."

Distanced from the original news story, Okón's video piece may have lost its immediate political poignancy, but he's managed to capture a slice of Americana that resonates beyond a single issue or news cycle. If members of the AZ Border Defenders are not among the people who occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon, they are certainly cultural and ideological cousins.

—SHAWN ROSSITER

**CHICAGO**

**Nicholas Frank: "Post-Self" at Western Exhibitions**

Everyone's tired of hearing about "selfies," the early front-runner in 21st century narcissism (though they even make me sympathetic to politicians, who daily are subjected to a close clinch with a series of idiots holding a cellphone at arms length). Nicholas Frank takes us back to a long-forgotten simpler and sylvan time—you know, a decade ago—when having your picture taken in front of some thing or place required the participation of another human being who would hold the camera or cellphone and do the deed. Frank gets around, and on trips this last decade to Great Britain, Russia, and China he engaged in the surreptitious act of taking pictures of people taking pictures of people. They look like a bit like a one-person firing squad, someone stands perfectly still in front of something, and the other stands or squats 10 or 15 feet away, also perfectly still, takes aim and shoots. Frank's project here is a wry slice of the human comedy, looking at a practically universal situation as a simultaneously intriguing and pathetic act, proving that old adage that wherever you go, there you are.

Frank is a witty and intelligent artist whose work falls between the ruminative and the quirkily revelatory. He enlivens this project by framing the inkjet prints of photographs in individual largish frames that are—I looked it up—isosceles trapezoids, meaning that two of the four unequal sides (here, always the left and right) are parallel while the other two are not. While the images are always plumb horizontal they don't appear so at first, seeming askew or foreshortened by their capriciously asymmetrical framing. This project had me humming "Picture Book" by the Kinks (go ahead, YouTube it) for weeks afterward. A second project by Frank, *Greatest Skips* (2015), had him amass all of those that were on his LP record collection and create another LP that for some 30 minutes (both sides) played his skips one at a time over and over. Hearing dozens of 3-4 second skips individually repeated 30 or 40 times in a row turns each one into a kind of chant, fragments of music sometimes vestigially recognizable. It's a bit of a retro Cage match, a refusal to overlook the accidents that seem like imperfections but actually invite a fresh rethinking of the medium. Nicely done!

—JAMES YOOD

**CHICAGO**

**Erin Washington: "Useful Knowledge" at Zolla/Lieberman Gallery**

Chicago-based artist Erin Washington's chalkboard-like works have a very strong material allure, though viewing them immediately directs one's thoughts far beyond the pieces'

physical presence. On the edges of each panel, globs of dried paint reveal the thin layers of tones that were built beneath the matte black grounds, and the surface bears the dusty smudges from marks made and erased as the compositions progressed. Modestly sized, these works on panel are filled with contents that feel grim, deep and encompassing. While there's no doubt that Washington's concerns are weighty and poignant, she counters that conceptual heaviness with material lightness: a wallpaper installation of wispy, reflective emergency blankets, and images on panels that are rendered delicately through drawn lines of white chalk.

Washington's *Search for Meaning* (2015) features a drawing of Viktor Frankl's renowned 1946 psychology text, "Man's Search for Meaning." In *Ruin and cosmic dust* (2015), the precisely drawn head of a classical-looking sculpture is missing its nose. Three drawings of the artist's own right hand after the removal of sutures years ago recall the history of medicine and anatomy. Such subject matter depicted with Washington's chalkboard technique reminds one the stuffy lecture halls of universities—places with one foot in the past and the other in the present. They suggest places where the facts and histories of the heavier sciences are discoursed in only one direction: from the teacher to the pupil. Yet Washington's works are the furthest thing from didacticism. While the chalkboard works in "Useful Knowledge" do nod to the finite nature of knowledge, they are far more emphatic upon that which is nebulous. The chalkboard is also the epitome of ephemerality: a surface that is intended for practice, false starts, or brainstorming, the space for the lengthy means to an end, as a problem or equation is worked through to its conclusion. The marks upon a chalkboard are the stuff that are not meant to stay, but to be inevitably wiped clean. That Washington's work depend on preserving these chalk marks emphasizes the methods and practices that take us from uncertainty to certainty.

—ROBIN DLUZEN



**"RUIN AND COSMIC DUST," 2015**

**Erin Washington**

CHALK, ACRYLIC, AND GOUACHE ON PANEL

34½" x 30"

PHOTO: COURTESY ZOLLA/LIEBERMAN GALLERY





THE JAMES GOLDSTEIN HOUSE, DESIGNED BY **John Lautner**  
PHOTO: ©JEFF GREEN, COURTESY: LACMA

The **Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)** announced the promise of a **John Lautner**-designed home by owner **James Goldstein** who purchased the estate in 1972. The promised gift, which includes a James Turrell Skyspace, "Above Horizon," its contents, and the surrounding estate to LACMA, and today shows the results of a 15-year collaboration between Goldstein and Lautner after the owner contacted the architect in 1979 to redesign aspects of the home which was first built in 1963, such as collaborating on custom-built minimalist furniture made of concrete, wood, and glass. The house famously entered into the lexicon of popular culture serving as the residence of character Jackie Treehorn's in the Coen brothers' seminal film, "The Big Lebowski" (1998).

The **University of California, Davis** has announced that the new Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, currently under construction, is scheduled to open to the public Sunday, November 13, 2016. The 75,000 square-foot museum site capped with a 50,000 square-foot "Grand Canopy" of perforated aluminum triangular beam reflects the collaborative design between associated architects SO-IL, an emerging firm based in Brooklyn, New York, and Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, based in San Francisco, Seattle and Pennsylvania.

RIGHT:  
RENDERING OF THE PLANNED  
JAN SHREM AND MARIA MANETTI SHREM  
MUSEUM OF ART, AT UC DAVIS  
**SO-IL/Bohlin Cywinski Jackson**

PHOTO: COURTESY SO-IL/BOHLIN CYWINSKI JACKSON,  
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

The **Wexner Center for the Arts** has been awarded a two-year, \$100,000 grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. The grant will be used to support ongoing production work by the Film/Video Studio Program as well as its residency program.

The **MacArthur Foundation** has announced 14 Chicago-based arts organizations recipients of the 2016 **MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions**, providing each organization with awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$1 million. The annual award, now in its eleventh year, has historically been distributed to creative organizations both nationally and internationally. This year, the awardees were drawn exclusively from the foundation's hometown in support of music, film, as well as theatrical, literary, and visual arts in Chicago, including the Hyde Park Art Center, which received a grant for \$625,000.



The roster of participating artists for the **Portland 2016 Biennial**, curated by Michelle Grabner, exhibition has been announced. Grabner, the Chair of Painting and Drawing department at SAIC and widely known as a co-curator of the 2014 Whitney Biennial, selected the 34 artists and artist teams after conducting 100 studio visits across the state resulting in over one-third of the participants coming from outside the city of Portland.

**Redwood Media Group** recently announced the acquisition of **Red Dot Art Fair**, a Miami Art Week venue, and **Art Santa Fe**, an international contemporary art fair celebrating its 16th year this July. Redwood Media Group currently owns and operates a bi-coastal roster of international art fairs, including Spectrum Miami, Artexpo New York, Spectrum Indian Wells, and Art San Diego.

After serving 10 years as the founder and executive director of **LAXART**, **Lauri Firstenberg** has announced her retirement, effective March 31, 2016. In an official statement, Firstenberg described the transition "from a founder-based organization to a new leadership team." The internationally recognized nonprofit, which recently moved from its longtime location in Culver City to Hollywood, built its reputation over the course of a decade launching over 500 exhibitions, public art programs, as well as biennials and festivals with leading local and national institutions. Firstenberg will continue her association with LAXART by serving on the board of directors.

The **Tamarind Institute** recently named **Diana Gaston**, curator of Fidelity Investment Corporate Art Collection for the past 12 years, as the new director replacing Marjorie Devon who retired after serving as director for 38 years. Devon was the last of three long-time veterans of the Institute who recently retired, following Education Director Rodney Hamon who retired in December 2015 after 16 years, and Tamarind master printer and workshop manager Bill Lagattuta who retired in July 2015 after 27 years.





PHOTO: MARK BRADFORD, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

Los Angeles-based artist **Mark Bradford** (pictured above) was recently named the recipient of the 2016 **David C. Driskell Prize**. Established in 2005 by the High Museum of Art, the Driskell Prize is the first national award to honor and celebrate contributions to the field of art of the African Diaspora. A cash award of \$25,000 accompanies the prize, which will be awarded to the artist at the Annual Driskell Prize Dinner on April 29.

#### People Moves:

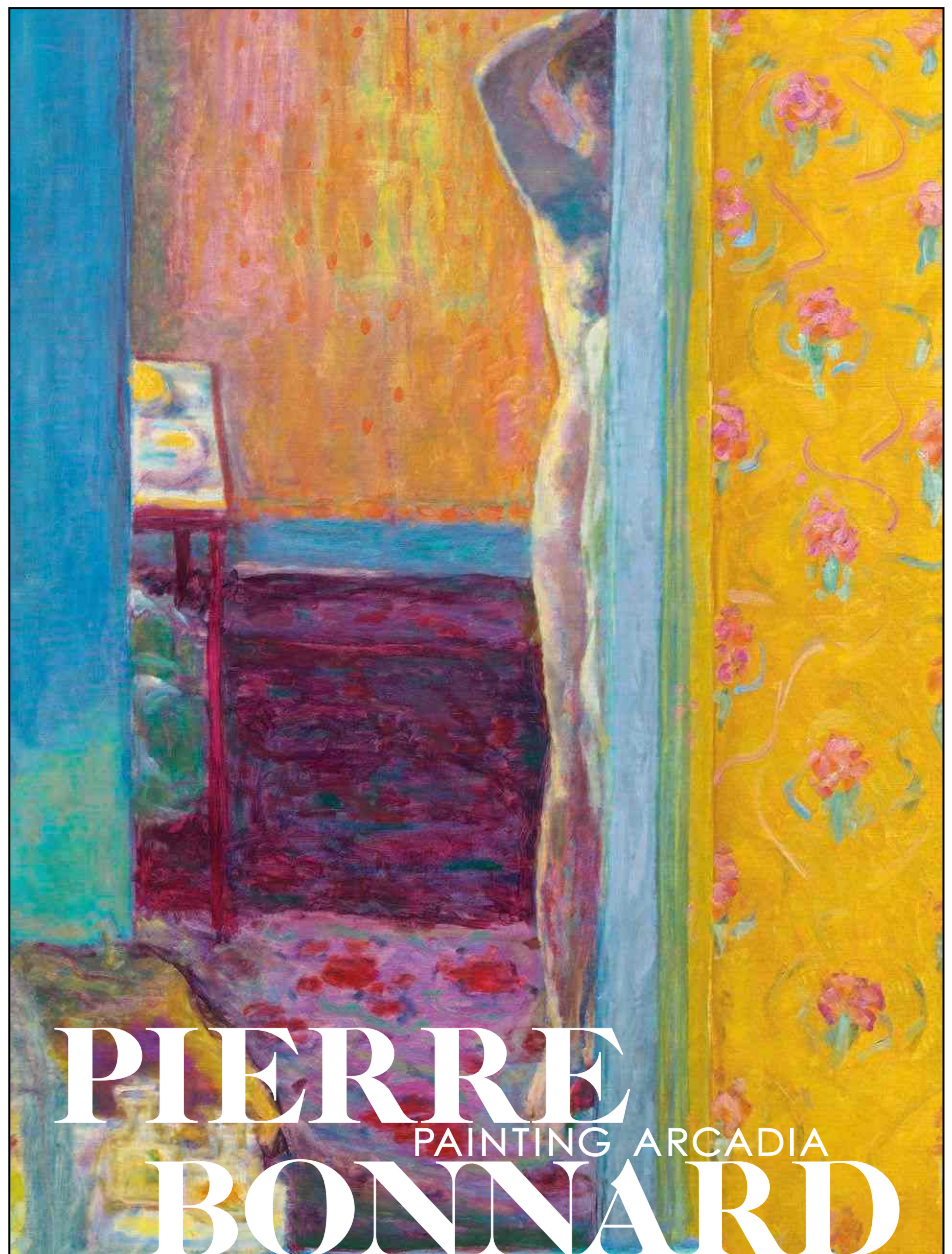
The **Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis** announced **Jeffrey Uslip**, who currently serves as chief curator, has been appointed deputy director for exhibitions and programs.

**Naima Keith**, formerly Associate Curator at the **Studio Museum** in Harlem, has been appointed Deputy Director of exhibitions and programs at the **California African American Museum**.

**Houston Center for Contemporary Craft** (HCCC) has announced **Perry Price** as the center's new executive director. Price previously served as director of education at the **American Craft Council** in Minneapolis, MN.

The **Seattle Art Fair** has announced the appointment of **Laura Fried**, who previously served as curator at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, to serve as the artistic director for the second annual event.

The **Corning Museum of Glass** announced the appointment of independent curator, writer and historian **Susie J. Silbert** as curator of modern and contemporary glass.



# PIERRE BONNARD

PAINTING ARCADIA

**FEB 6–MAY 15, 2016**

The son of a French bureaucrat, Pierre Bonnard turned his back on a conventional career and was instead seduced by a life of painting. His work reflected an Arcadian vision of everyday life filled with color, light, humor, and tenderness. See more than 70 paintings and photographs that reveal the artist as a key figure bridging Impressionism and modernism.

**Legion of Honor**  
LINCOLN PARK

This exhibition is organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, and the Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid.



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Pierre Bonnard, *Nude in an Interior (detail)*, ca. 1935. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 2006.128.8. © 2015 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



## DALLAS

A collector's unique bequest helps Dallas Museum of Art enhance its permanent collection.

Imagine having carte blanche to acquire any work from an outstanding private collection. That dream scenario recently became a reality for the Dallas Museum of Art. When collector and Museum supporter Dorace Maritzky Fichtenbaum passed away last July, she left behind a bequest allowing DMA curators the opportunity to select whatever they would like from her treasure trove of modern and contemporary American and European artwork, as well as objects from African, Asian and Ancient Mesoamerican cultures. Widowed in 1984, Fichtenbaum amassed the collection largely on her own. The Museum selected 138 objects, which, according to Olivier Meslay, Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, represented about half of her vast collection. As Fichtenbaum left no heirs, the fate of the remainder of the work is unknown.

The Museum selectively chose works that complemented already existing collections or enhanced underrepresented areas. "She was very interested in women artists and German Expressionists, which for us is a great opportunity to strengthen our holdings in these areas," explains Meslay. The work of German Expressionists represented a void in an otherwise dynamic collection of Modern European art at the DMA. With Fichtenbaum's bequest, the Museum now owns a thorough representation of this period, comprised largely of drawings, watercolors and prints. In addition to the pantheon of expressionists, such as Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, George Grosz and Käthe Kollwitz, among others, Fichtenbaum also owned work by artists such as Gabriele Münther, Erich Heckel and August Macke. Works on paper by Wassily Kandinsky, Francesco

Clemente, Joan Miró, Karel Appel, Howard Hodgkin, Jean Dubuffet, Edvard Munch, Tracey Emin and Lucian Freud and sculpture by Jean Arp round out the broader collection of European Modernism.

The collection's roster of female artists is equally impressive. Late 20th-century luminaries such as Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell, Lee Bontecou, Jenny Holzer, Kiki Smith and Susan Rothenberg are well represented. Meslay applauds Fichtenbaum's collecting acumen, particularly in this area. He says, "The piece that she acquired at the beginning of the 1980s from Yayoi Kusama is very strong. And the Eva Hesse works on paper are extremely rare." Fichtenbaum rounded it out with the work of regionally prominent artists such as Annette Lawrence and Linda Ridgway.

Her canonical collection of 20th-century American male artists is also noteworthy, and includes work by Ben Shahn, Roy Lichtenstein, Chuck Close, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden and Frank Stella. Among the many gems in this cache is the rare and unique Jasper Johns' *0 to 9* suite of lithographs from the early 1960s. A small, spherical wooden wall piece by Martin Puryear is also joining the DMA collection. Artists with local Texas roots include David Bates, Vernon Fisher and Sam Gummelt.

Beginning this month, these works will be exhibited together as a cohesive collection for a final time. This select group of objects will remain on view for six to eight months. Gavin Delahunty, The Hoffman Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, envisions an



exhibition installation reflective of its previous surroundings. He says, "Dorace Fichtenbaum's collection covered nearly every wall of her home. For the DMA presentation we will replicate this aesthetic with a salon style hang—grouping objects by similarity and likeness in the way that their previous owner tried to rationalize and organize the diversity of her collection." Once the exhibition closes, Meslay says, conservation work will be done on the works on paper before they return to the darkness of their boxes. He stresses that it is "not because the work was treated badly," but rather to re-mat much of it onto safer paper. Some of the African objects will go on view immediately and plans are afoot to put Mitchell's iconic 1981 painting, *Untitled*, on display.

Fichtenbaum travelled widely and often brought home indigenous objects from her sojourns. However, beyond the canon of Western art, it is the addition of her African objects that will be most keenly felt. While African art is already well represented at the Museum, these pieces will fill in some gaps. Dr. Roslyn Walker, Senior Curator of the Arts of Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific, looks forward to the addition of a Chokwe scepter from Angola for a variety of reasons. "The scepter complements the collection of royal regalia from modern Ghana, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo," she says. Walker is equally enthusiastic to explore how these works can provide a deeper understanding of the communities in which they were created. She adds, "I am especially excited about the Yoruba *Gelede* headdress from Nigeria. It is clearly by a different artist than one already in the collection. It proves a point about how artists execute the established canon, i.e., they give it their own 'aesthetic spin.'"

In addition to her collection, Fichtenbaum leaves behind the good feelings of DMA board members, docents and friends. Meslay calls her gift "the ultimate generosity." Unlike many collectors, Fichtenbaum lived quietly among her treasures. For Meslay, it was a revelation that a local collector lived under the radar and amassed such an important body of work. He concludes, "For me, what is most exciting about this bequest is the human aspect of it: someone who collected these works, loved them and gave them to us. We are all deeply grateful."

—NANCY COHEN ISRAEL

OPPOSITE LEFT TO RIGHT:

WOMAN AT THE STUDIO WINDOW  
(WEIBLICHER AKT BEIM STUDIOFENSTER), 1913

**Erich Heckel**

WATERCOLOR AND CHARCOAL ON PAPER

18½" x 15½"

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART,

BEQUEST OF DORACE M. FICHTENBAUM

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EARLY 20TH CENTURY

YORUBA PEOPLES, NIGERIA, AFRICA

WOOD, LEATHER AND PIGMENT

OVERALL: 9½" x 8½" x 9½"

COURTESY DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART,

BEQUEST OF DORACE M. FICHTENBAUM



Seymour Rosofsky, *Patient in Dentist's Chair* (detail), 1961, Oil on canvas. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of the Rosofsky Estate, 2014.16.

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## BERKELEY

After years of planning, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive gets a new home.

It's been a challenging few years in the Bay Area art world. There's been the shuttering or scattering of galleries from central locations. The temporary closure (due to construction) of two of the area's museums, including the anchoring SFMOMA. Artists getting priced out of studio space. And so on. That is all making an extreme about face this year, starting out with an incredible January, which was topped off, on the last day of the month, by the reopening of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) in its new, spectacular home. (Earlier in the month the artist house museum of David Ireland, 500 Capp Street, opened, and the San Francisco Arts Commission introduced its new, much improved gallery location). The excitement around BAMPFA's new space was palpable leading up to and including the opening, which saw lines around the block. BAMPFA director Lawrence Rinder also noted that the institution surpassed its \$105 million capital campaign goal and the opening night gala alone raised around \$1 million.

The University Art Museum, as it was first named, opened in 1964 on the UC Berkeley campus under the direction of former MoMA curator Peter Selz (who has remained a fixture on the Bay Area art scene, and whose fresh insights this magazine publishes to this very day). Within six years, it moved off campus to a new space: the bold and well-loved Brutalist-style building designed by Mario Ciampi. However, the Bay Area being the shifty place it is, in 1997, the structure was deemed seismically unsound. The hunt was on for a new home, which was finally decided on in 2010, and BAMPFA closed the doors of the Ciampi building at the end of 2014 to relocate.

BAMPFA's new space, designed by internationally recognized architectural firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro—who are also responsible for the ICA Boston, the expansion of MOMA, and the recently opened Broad Museum in LA, among other notable structures—is in many ways the opposite of its predecessor. Where the Ciampi was heavy—made of rough, grey concrete slabs, exposed inside and out—the new space is light, with a lot of traditional white, and features clean, smooth lines. Where the interior of the old space had a loud visual voice, the DS+R building stands back; as Rinder points out, the current galleries are intentionally neutral, allowing the artwork to take center stage, and it does. Reduced, but intentionally not gone—an homage to the Ciampi—are the old building's open sightlines. But where the former museum was so open inside it could be distracting, the current configuration provides both focused moments and the ability to look across spaces. To add icing to the cake, the new museum is also situated in a more easily accessible location, just a block from the Downtown Berkeley BART station.

This new structure was not without unique challenges. First was the melding of old with new: for its relocation, BAMPFA was provided the late-1930s Art Deco-style UC Berkeley printing plant, but the museum required additional space. This was achieved in two ways: a second floor was dug out under the existing structure; and there is an addition, which spills off to one side and looks somewhat like a twisted rectangle. The movement of the biomorphic new construction—which also creates interesting curved spaces inside—plays



nicely off of the blocky existing structure, just as the silvery grey of the stainless steel covering the new structure plays off of the white of the printing plant. Architect Charles Renfro points out that he is particularly excited about how nicely the structures mesh, both inside and out; the transition areas are indeed fluid. To temper the coldness of the abundant steel and glass utilized, the interior features custom wood structures designed by master woodworker Paul Discoe, using pine reclaimed from the build site: "The level of craftsmanship is really high," noted Rinder. Interior accent walls in a deep chili red also add warmth.

The building also succeeds in melding the museum's two distinct agendas: "We are unique among museums," Rinder explains, "because BAMPFA encompasses art and film in equal measure," so the space must do double duty. Because the original museum was built before the film archives were part of the organization, this hadn't been addressed from a design perspective before (and the two entities have been housed in completely separate spaces since 1999, so this also marks something of a reunion). From the exterior, this is done directly: one side of the museum features large plate-glass windows that look on to an "art wall," a 60-by-25-foot mural space for which

a new work of art will be commissioned every six months (the first piece, titled *The World Garden*, was created by Chinese artist Qiu Zhijie). On the other side of the building is a 30-foot outdoor LED screen for public screenings (yes, it's very cool). Inside, in addition to 25,000 square feet of gallery space, BAMPFA houses two state-of-the-art theaters, touted as some of the best places to watch film to be found.

For the first exhibition, Rinder chose, appropriately, to focus on architecture. But he approaches it both from a straightforward sense as well as by looking at architecture as a metaphor. The resulting show, titled "Architecture of Life," well establishes the museum's role in being, as Rinder said, "quasi-encyclopedic," while also being accessible, a driving focus for the museum. "As the doorstep to the university, the museum needs to be welcoming to everyone," states Rinder. The show features over 250 works spanning 2,000 years. It readily draws well-thought and pleasantly unexpected connections to this broader concept of architecture—in Rinder's accurate description, "It's a poetic excursion." It also nicely blends work by well-known artists—for instance, Georgia O'Keeffe, Chris Johanson, Buckminster Fuller and Hans Hofmann (whose gift of 45 paintings and \$250,000 in 1963 is how the museum got its start)—with those lesser known or more obscure, showing the wide breadth of the museum's curatorial reach as well as its holdings. "Our collection encompasses artwork dating back to 3000 BC as well as new commissioned work; it's very diverse," Rinder observes.

The curatorial aim for exhibitions over the next year and into 2017 is to highlight that quasi-encyclopedic diversity, with shows of both historical work and that which is more current. "Berkeley Eye: Perspectives on the Collection," "Mind over Matter: Conceptual Art from the Collection," "Repentant Monk: Illusion and Disillusion in the Art of Chen Hongshou," and "Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta" are a few of the upcoming exhibitions.

About his new space, Rinder enthusiastically notes that "it's a new instrument for me, and it plays well." Echoing early expressed sentiments of the museumgoers, he adds, "It feels great."

—CHÉRIE LOUISE TURNER

AERIAL VIEW FROM THE UC BERKELEY CAMPUS OF UC BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE, 2016

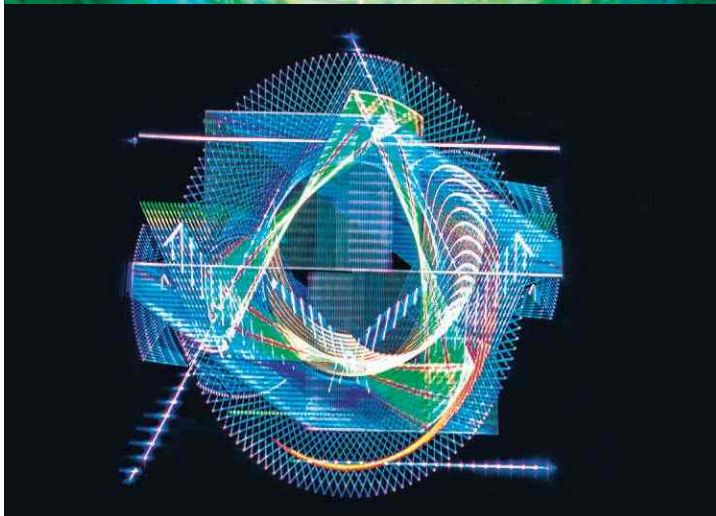
Diller Scofidio + Renfro

PHOTO: IWAN BAAN

COURTESY: DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO; EHDD; AND UC BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE (BAMPFA)

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## PORTLAND

### Print Culture is booming in the Pacific Northwest.

In a state abounding with natural resources—the Cascade mountain range, old-growth forests, copper mines dating to the 1860s—and a hardworking, practical-minded populace descended from pioneer stock, it's apropos that printmaking would come to prominence in Oregon's cultural milieu. Natural materials are endemic to stone lithography, woodblock prints, copperplate, and other variants, as are the methodical approach and old-fashioned elbow grease required to master these intensely physical processes. But symbolic links between nature and materiality are far from the only reasons that Oregon, and Portland in particular, has become a mecca for printmakers. A broad confluence of infrastructure and esprit de corps was on display for the world to see this January at the third annual Portland Fine Print Fair, held at Portland Art Museum, and will draw similar worldwide attention from March 30 to April 2. That's when the city will host the annual SGCI (Southern Graphics Council International) conference—only the second time in the organization's 44-year history that the conference will have visited the West Coast.

To take even a cursory snapshot of the printmaking scene in Oregon, one needs a wide-angle lens. Drawings and prints have formed an important part of the Portland Art Museum's holdings and programming ever since its founding in 1892. Significant gifts and acquisitions through the decades reached a climax in 1978, when art educator and curator Gordon Gilkey donated some 8,000 prints to PAM, spanning the gamut of techniques, subject matter, and historical practices. The gift became the cornerstone of what is today a collection of 22,000 works on paper. Notably, many of the region's best-known artists taught printmaking at PAM in its earlier years, when it had an educational arm known as The Museum Art School. Louis Bunce taught screenprinting there, Manuel Izquierdo taught relief printing, and George Johanson taught etching. In the regional visual-arts culture, those are some big guns.

Another Portland print-community milestone came a year after Gilkey's donation, when Robert Kochs became owner and director of Augen Gallery. Under his direction, Augen went on to become one of the Northwest's leading sources of Modernist, Pop, and contemporary prints. With his encyclopedic knowledge of the medium and its market, Kochs has brokered major acquisitions for a roster of exacting clients. Among these is one of the West Coast's most important print collectors, Jordan D. Schnitzer, whose personal and Family Foundation collections include nearly 10,000 prints, with an emphasis on Warhol, Lichtenstein, Ellsworth Kelly, John Baldessari, Robert Longo, and Kara Walker. Schnitzer has not only lent his prints to myriad exhibitions at the Portland Art Museum and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum at the University of Oregon (Eugene), but to dozens of museums around the world, without charging exhibition fees.

In 1981, two years after Kochs bought Augen, the nonprofit Northwest Print Council/Print Arts Northwest was founded, exhibiting works by artist members and printmakers of international renown. The organization's educational outreaches are part of a strong pedagogical tradition in Portland, with printmaking courses or entire programs offered variously at the Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland State University, Portland Community College, and the



Oregon College of Art and Craft (all of which are co-sponsoring the SGCI conference), as well as Lewis & Clark College and Reed. The tradition of teaching and learning continues at the SGCI event, with classes built around this year's theme, "Flux: The Edge of Yesterday and Tomorrow." In addition to seminars devoted to Japanese and Native American printmaking, there is a host of timely topics built into the conference curriculum, among them "Socially Engaged Printmaking" and "Printmaking and Gender." In addition to a lifetime achievement award to be bestowed on this year's keynote speaker, painter and printmaker James Rosenquist, two other awardees, Tom Prochaska and Christy Wyckoff, will be honored for their decades-long teaching careers at PNCA.

For his part, Wyckoff believes that economic necessities tend to draw "print people" together. "It's a subculture where you're not just the Lone Ranger doing everything by yourself," he says. "Because of the cost of the equipment, you're sharing space and tools with other people. There's a lot of collaboration." He also feels that Portland-based printmakers have benefited from the longtime presence in the city of Gamblin Paint Company, which offers a wide array of printer's inks, and McClain's Printmaking Supplies in nearby Tigard, which imports Japanese woodblock print supplies and papers.

"We have an ecosystem here that supports prints: makers, suppliers, collectors, galleries, schools, and of course the museum," echoes Portland Art Museum's curator for prints and drawings. Mary Weaver Chapin. "One thing that impressed me when I came here was the presence of makers, not just in traditional printmaking, but also letterpress and other processes where people are striking out on their own, not just sitting around waiting for official approval. It's really vigorous and unapologetic." As exemplars, she points to local printmaking entrepreneurs Mark and Rae Mahaffey, who run Mahaffey Fine Art, a collaborative printmaking workshop, and to the powerful impact of Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, a printmaking studio and gallery in Eastern Oregon founded by James Lavadour, arguably Oregon's most celebrated living artist.

These synergies, which are easy for local artists to take for granted, are immediately apparent to printmaking professionals who visit from other parts of the country and the world. David O'Donoghue, co-director of Stoney Road Press (Dublin, Ireland) was one of 18 exhibitors with booths at the Portland Fine Print Fair. "Of all the fairs we do," he remarked afterwards, "nowhere except in Portland have I seen a queue halfway down the block to get in half-an-hour before it opens!" As to the attendees themselves, "They know what they're looking at, and they're not shy. They're asking questions, they're engaged, they're passionate about printmaking techniques, they love paper and deckled edges—and they all seem to know one another."

Community, infrastructure, and an affinity between landscape, materials, and process all contribute to a "perfect storm" of opportunity for print aficionados in Oregon. Or, more dramatically, as Chapin puts it: "This state is bearish on prints—it's a fervor!"

—RICHARD SPEER

OPPOSITE TOP TO BOTTOM:

PORTLAND FINE PRINT FAIR 2016

PHOTO: COURTESY PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

STUDIO SHOT, MIDWEST PRESSED, FEATURED AT THE SGCI

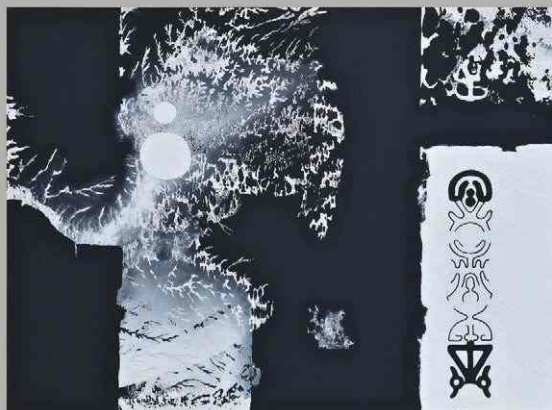
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# REBECCA CAMPBELL (This is Your Life)

**Investing narrative painting with her own personal content and a keen appreciation for artifice, the LA-based painter is hitting her stride with three new bodies of work.**

**By Shana Nys Dambrot**

Rebecca Campbell at just 44 is already established as one of the most intriguing and accomplished artists of her generation and a brightly burning star of the Los Angeles painting firmament. What is particularly fascinating about her popularity (among curators, critics, collectors, and most especially other painters) is that she arrived at it while practicing an almost counter-revolutionary dedication to craftsmanship, technique, and facility in the historically conventional genre of representational, narrative, and [gasp] deeply personal figurative painting, at a time when academic thought heavily favored conceptual, abstract modes of art making. But if the region-wide Rebecca Campbell exhibition juggernaut that has been her 2016 so far is any indication, it may finally be time to pronounce that particular mountain conquered.

Circumstances conspired to produce a cluster of three major gallery and institutional exhibitions in a partially overlapping consecutive rollout which, when considered together, formulate a kind of ad hoc mid-career survey for Campbell. The triad is comprised of "You are Here," a solo exhibition of portraits of female art-world colleagues at LA Louver from January 13 – February 13; "Dreams of Another Time," a two-person show with Samantha Fields of early and very new paintings and process materials at Cal State Long Beach's University Art Museum from January 30 – April 10; and "The Potato Eaters," an ambitious painting and sculptural installation completed in 2013 but not shown in its entirety until its May 7 – July 24 run at Lancaster MOAH, after which it travels to Brigham Young University Museum of Art in September.

While showing discrete bodies of work, and organized by three different curatorial teams, the pronounced interactions that emerge between them—some of which even came as a revelation to the artist herself—serve to highlight the evolution of both the conceptual and formal dynamics underpinning the span of her entire practice. Taken together, the result is a thoroughgoing articulation of who she is as an artist and as a woman, and of how her personal experience has come to shape her public style over the course of, as she describes, a lifetime of figuring things out by painting them. "Decorum, wit, and vagary posing as intellectual reserve," states Campbell, "are just not that interesting to me."

Partly due to her willingness to experiment in public, and partly because complexity, contradiction, paradox, and a gift for fusing chaos and control suit her tastes, Campbell's stylistic gestalt is hard to encapsulate. She is more than adept at a panoply of aesthetic modes from thick impasto to silky-fine surface, precise realism and abstract expressionism, kaleidoscopic atmospherics, and black-and-white reductivism. She is at her best when, as she frequently does, she deploys several of these modes within a given singular composition, forcing dualities of mind and body, emotion and intellect, allegory and formalism into uneasy, dynamic coexistence.

"Dig," 2013

OIL ON CANVAS, 80" x 80"

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LA LOUVER









In "Dreams of Another Time" at the UAM, curator Kristina Newhouse organized an utterly original two-person show with Campbell and her contemporary, the equally accomplished and highly regarded Los Angeles painter Samantha Fields. One premise of the pairing is the idea that while our imaginations and identities are formed early in life, they remain perennially available for revision and remediation. While Newhouse selected older pieces from each artist in support of the presentation of major new works, the core exercise of the show was in the construction of their almost mythological origin stories. Each chose events culled from popular culture that happened in the year they were born. Fields, whose landscape-based practice is known for depicting natural disasters and urban inconveniences, chose the land-fall of Hurricane Agnes in June 1972. Campbell chose the April 1971 issue of *Playboy*.

"I thought this was a truly fascinating starting point," says Campbell, "both in the collaboration but also in terms of speaking to our long-term evolution as artists. I thought it was very telling that what I

chose and what Samantha chose were so fundamentally different and yet relatable as essential to our practices." Campbell chose a social situation and cultural institution that immediately conjure the human (nude, female) figure, which is fundamental to her practice. While the correlation between hurricanes and soft-core porn might not be obvious in any other context, both artists commend Newhouse's insight into the territory they do share—the allegorical coexistence of darkness and beauty, along with the formal concerns of advancing abstraction within pictorial space."

As Newhouse writes in the catalogue, both artists employ "compositional devices [which] serve to alert the viewer that any act of painterly representation is always already an act of artifice and consciously so." For Fields, this has to do with faithfully representing the distortions inherent in her photo-based image sourcing when migrating to the canvas. For Campbell it's the heavy trowelling and application of tape, whitewash, gold leaf, and glitter to perfectly finished works, that both "obscures" and "re-fetishizes" the women

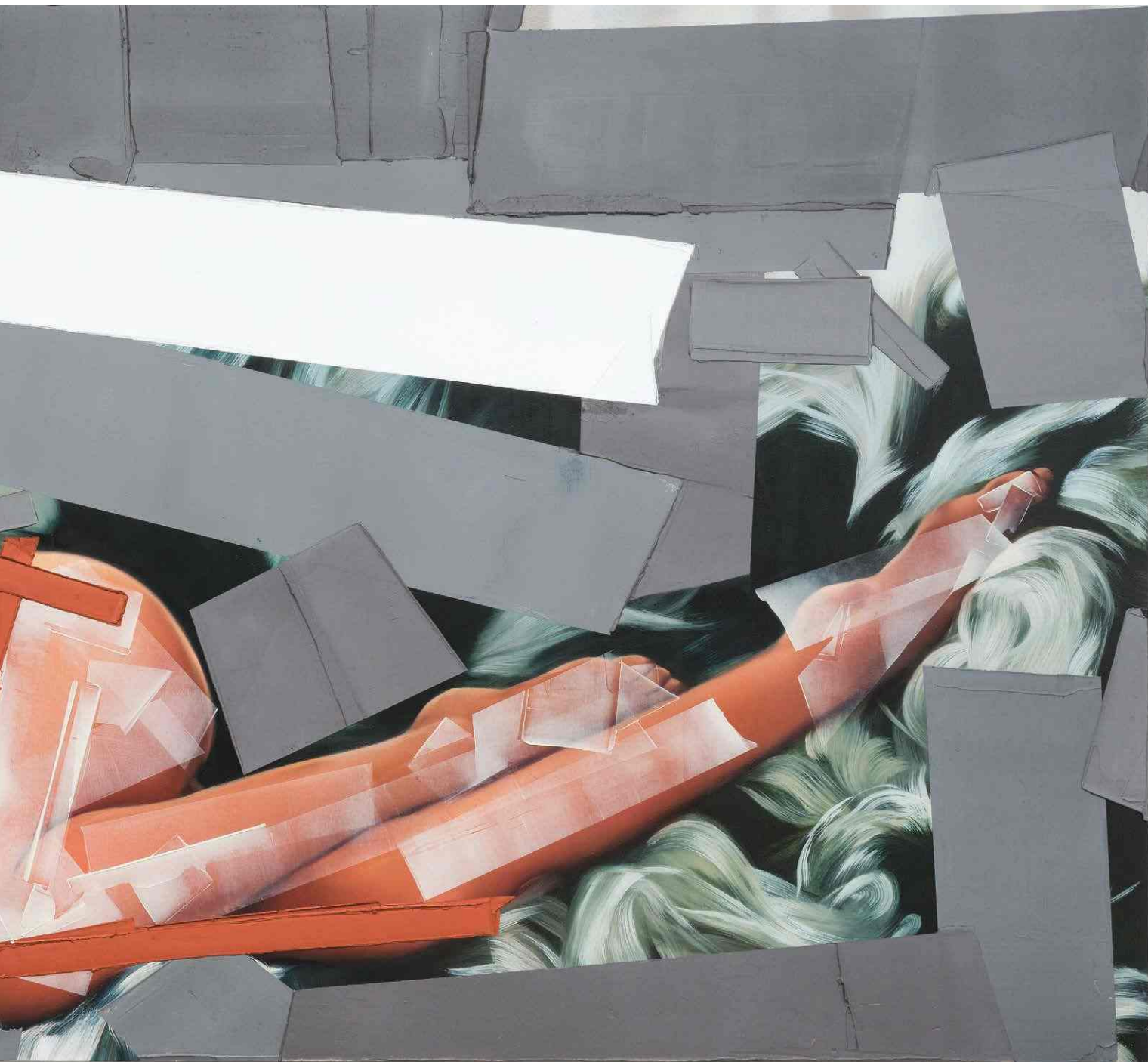


portrayed. In works like *Miss April 1971*, *Glitter Girl*, and *Candy Darling* (all 2015), Campbell creates a rainbow-pierced whiplash of seduction and obstacle, desire and artifice, art history and empty calories, spectacle and interiority that speaks directly to her long-standing interest in notions of beauty, femininity, and sexuality and the people and institutions that define those terms. "These are ideas I find myself intensely drawn to and repelled by at the same time," says Campbell. "Conversations going on now in feminism about intersectionality, pragmatism, or even betrayal are very important to me. This confusing and exciting phenomena for me perfectly exemplifies the human condition of existing in multiplicity." In this context, her decision to include at least one drag icon in a presentation on constructing female identity makes perfect sense, as both a political and a practical gesture.

"MISS APRIL 1971," 2014  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER, 11½" x 23"  
PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND L.A. LOUVER, VENICE

Another thing the two artists have in common is that Fields and Campbell both view photography as integral to process and germane to subject. Fields takes her own road-trip pictures, while Rebecca favors extant materials, but for both it's still about personal experience being tethered to the general zeitgeist. Fields' relationship to photography posits a version of realism that includes the reality that our perceptions and experiences are constantly, indelibly mediated.

"For me, photography often fails to capture the moment, and I'm interested in how the act of translating that photograph into a painting can imbue it with what's missing. A camera lens can see more than my eyes do. So what is reality?" Campbell describes her relationship to photography as more mixed. "Like a paintbrush, it is a tool I use to make the object I'm interested in making. On the other hand, I have a very formal relationship with photography. I'm interested in the way it speaks to light and flatness and color blending. And finally there's the conceptual conundrum of photography. Is it performance? Is it just outdated technology? Are photographs magical relics of bodies moving in space that subversively rage against death? Well, yes, yes, and yes."







Iterations of photographs appear in different roles throughout Campbell's work, suitably reflective of this mixed relationship. In the operatic, captivating masterpiece *Tangle*, for example, a woman sleeps in her bed under a salon-style wall of small paintings and framed photographs positioned in such a way as to read both as the woman's memories and dreams. The large central canvas containing this scene is flanked on either side by a number of small paintings just like the ones on the wall inside the picture, except they have

bellion against authority, religiosity, and provincialism and the legacy of that time in the formation of her character and life path. But because she is the artist that she is, every bit of that tumult finds physical expression in the way paint sits on canvas. And in the way light strikes the hefty sculptural installation made from hundreds of mason jars of canned yet slowly decaying fruit—part *Light & Space*, part Damien Hirst, part country farm life. Though completed in 2013, its juxtaposition of large-scale, multi-dextrous and florid works like

**“On the other hand, I have a very formal relationship with photography. I’m interested in the way it speaks to light and flatness and color blending. And finally there’s the conceptual conundrum of photography. Is it performance? Is it just outdated technology? Are photographs magical relics of bodies moving in space that subversively rage against death? Well, yes, yes, and yes.”**

peeled off Pygmalion-like and become their own works existing in the gallery space, as self-contained objects. Aside from the charming conceit of this strategy for blurring boundaries between real and depicted space, it serves to remind the viewer that by the time you see the work it is always already modified by terms of art and operations of consciousness.

Photographs used in the same way—as both source and content, object and document—are central to another of these shows: “The Potato Eaters,” coming up at MOAH. Based on an archive of family photographs, many dating back to her parents’ and grandparents’ youth, this series is one of the most literally autobiographical she has undertaken. In considering her roots, Campbell seeks to examine and confront the tumult of rejection and acceptance contained in her re-

the Courbet-inspired *Dig*, with intimately scaled, often black-and-white snapshot-based works like *Dad in Snow*, *Big Sister*, and *Little Brother* prefigures the recombinant consciousness of the *Tangle* installation in ways both conceptual and formal.

Meanwhile, “You are Here” at LA Louver presented a sort of snapshot of an ongoing project which is “definitely not done” to portray the women populating her world—especially her art world. All the same size and all utilizing more or less the same constrained palette of black, white and touches of dusty rose, rendered in an orchestration of loose strokes and tender detail, the overall effect is both equalizing and individualized. Each one is a powerful single image, but presented in formation, it takes on the tenor and mantle of a movement. Although on the surface this undertaking might seem

like something of a departure from the intensely personal content of the other projects, one quickly sees that it is both a feminist gesture of social/personal/art historical rectification, addressing the untenable marginalization of female artists in the art historical discourse, as well as an investigation of the current status of portraiture specifically within the contemporary painting conversation. In other words, vintage Campbell. "I foresee a much larger and more inclusive body of work," says the artist. "In the end my fantasy is to have a giant museum show with huge walls covered with images of amazing women. They will be undeniable in their collective power."

One of the most arresting moments in the Long Beach show was the inclusion of a group of a dozen or so 1999 self-portraits, each one an elaborately detailed alternate persona. They are the same size and style as the new portraits, and were installed in direct reference to the Louver configuration. Campbell characterizes the 1999 series using now-familiar language, as an attempt to get to know herself better, "to figure out who she was" politically, sexually, creatively, and intellectually. The connections seem clear, yet Campbell was not thinking at all of the connection between these two bodies of work. She had already started the new series of artist portraits when Kristina came to her with a vague remembrance of them, sitting in a drawer at LA Louver for over a dozen years. Campbell immediately came to "absolutely love the connection between these two series. The self-portraits with their interior gaze, and the artist portraits with

their exterior gaze." Noting the fact that the older self-portraits are actually alter-egos, both not herself and at the same time, "very deeply me," Campbell accepts that undertaking the artist portraits project now on some level says as much or more about her as it does about the sitters. "Narrative painting and personal content and, dare I say autobiography, have been and always will be radical. It's hard and brave work and when it goes wrong it is a train wreck of epic proportions, embarrassing the artist and audience. But when it goes right it hits us exactly in the center of our humanity." For Campbell, it is definitely going right.

**OPPOSITE:**

"BIG FISH," 2014

OIL ON BOARD, 33" x 40"

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LA LOUVER

**BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT:**

ANNIE, HEATHER, KRISTIN, PATRICIA, MPAMBO, SUSAN  
FROM THE "YOU ARE HERE" SERIES

2015, ACRYLIC ON PAPER, ALL WORKS 30" x 22¼"

AS INSTALLED AT LA LOUVER GALLERY





# Introducing the **MONSTER ROSTER**

Out of the existential dread of postwar America, a group of Chicago artists founded a loose movement that preceded Imagism, and laid the roots for the city's signature style.

By James Yood



Contemporary art in Chicago has a Date Of Birth, and it's February 24, 1966—so this year it hits the big 5-0! 2/24/66: that's the day the first of a several year sequence of exhibitions of young Chicago artists was held at the Hyde Park Art Center that would, in the aggregate, come to define Chicago Imagism. That first show—titled "The Hairy Who" (sounds like a groovy band, don't you just love that 1960s up-beat insouciance? It's all over their work too!)—was comprised of the work of Jim Falconer, Art Green, Gladys Nilsson, Jim Nutt, Suellen Rocca and Karl Wirsum. The Hairy Who showed together a few more times over the next couple of years, and were joined at the HPAC by a series of other group shows of young Chicagoans who called themselves, in turn, "The Nonplussed Some," "The False Image,"

"Marriage Chicago Style," and "Chicago Antigua." Artists such as Roger Brown, Sarah Canright, Ed Flood, Philip Hanson, Ed Paschke, Christina Ramberg, Barbara Rossi, and more, had significant local debuts in those latter exhibitions, and by the early 1970s the roster that would dominate art from Chicago for the next several decades was off and running.

ABOVE:  
INSTALLATION VIEW OF "MONSTER ROSTER" AT SMART MUSEUM, CHICAGO

"ANGEL," 1953, **Theodore Halkin**  
OIL OVER GOUACHE ON BOARD. COLLECTION OF THE ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM  
PHOTOS: COURTESY SMART MUSEUM









But something never comes from nothing. There was art and there were artists in Chicago before the advent of the Imagist generation, and in several instances—Ivan Albright, for example—they achieved national recognition, and artists such as John Storrs, Archibald Motley, Richard Hunt, Gertrude Abercrombie and others enjoyed significant careers. And there was a generation of artists working in Chicago throughout the 1950s, just before the rise of the Imagists, that also included participants who would achieve local and/or national stature (Robert Barnes, Dominick Di Meo, Leon Golub, Theodore Halkin, June Leaf, Irving Petlin, Seymour Rosofsky, Nancy Spero, Evelyn Statsinger, H. C. Westermann, etc.) This latter group, collectively known as the “Monster Roster,” is currently receiving its first large museum examination (through June 12) at the Smart Museum of Art, at the University of Chicago. Titled “Monster Roster: Existentialist Art in Postwar Chicago,” the show is curated by independent curators and gallery owners John Corbett and Jim Dempsey along with Smart Museum curators Richard A. Born and Jessica Moss.

It’s an intriguing exhibition, a bit unwieldy (it has four curators and six essayists), and to those fairly familiar with this material there was little that seemed a game-changer here. But seeing the work together, as it so rarely was during its creation or since, is a valuable experience. As the exhibition’s title indicates, the curators buy into—as I think they should—similar arguments made about Abstract Expressionism in New York during the same period: that this was a charged moment in art history when existence and art-making seemed a matter of life and death, when the question on many lips was, “Should I die or should I paint?” As Harold Rosenberg (who later taught at the University of Chicago) put it, “painting became the means of confronting in daily practice the problematic nature of modern individuality.” Note Rosenberg’s decisive word choice, not the “potentially problematic nature...” not the “sometimes problematic nature...” but straight out and blatant, modern individuality was problematic. Art-making was serious stuff, a sensibility that permeated and obsessed all these artists, formed in the dramatic crucible of the 1930s and 1940s.

Imagine you are, for example, Leon Golub. You’re born in Chicago in 1922, so when you’re a small boy, the economic system of the planet comes crashing down in the worst Depression of the century, and the next decade seems an endless stream of unemployment lines morphing into soup lines, lean and mean. You’re so bright that you earn your BA in 1942 at the age of 20 at the University of Chicago and then enlist, spending most of the next four years in Europe with the US Army. Then the war ends, but instead of the giddy flush of victory, it all seems soiled, the horrors of the Holocaust are exposed all around you in Europe, and your government drops atomic bombs on Japanese cities. You return home to Chicago for study at the SAIC under the GI Bill to a hard and tough blue-collar city (read Nelson Algren’s 1951 essay “Chicago: City on the Make”) and begin a marriage in pretty dire poverty, just as the Cold War starts and nuclear annihilation becomes a realistic concept. So, if you’re Leon Golub, you’re probably not going to paint two pears and an apple. And Golub didn’t.

And it wasn’t just Golub. As curator John Corbett notes, that very real sense of existential dread casts a shadow over much of the Roster’s output from its early days. “The aspect of the Monster Roster that was somewhat unexpected to us was the force that WWII exerted on virtually all of the artists’ work,” he observes. “So the deep psychological element, which of course also relates to all sorts of other things like Freudian psychoanalysis, Greek and Roman mythology, and existential philosophy, is rooted in a palpable sense of anxiety and dread. That portentousness germinated in the direct experience of the war for many of the artists, and in the terrifying fear of nuclear annihilation that was a prevalent part of American daily life in the ‘50s.”

ABOVE:  
“THE ISCHIAN SPHINX,” 1956, **Leon Golub**  
OIL AND LACQUER ON CANVAS. COLLECTION OF ULRICH AND HARRIET MEYER  
ART © ESTATE OF LEON GOLUB/LICENSED BY VAGA, NEW YORK

RIGHT:  
“MAN WITH A DOG,” c. 1950, **George M. Cohen**  
OIL ON BOARD. COURTESY GEORGE COHEN ESTATE  
PHOTOS: COURTESY SMART MUSEUM









**"UNTITLED," 1958, Fred Berger**  
OIL ON CANVAS. SMART MUSEUM OF ART, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
GIFT OF ROBERT AND MARY DONLEY  
PHOTO: COURTESY SMART MUSEUM

In contrast to AbEx, the work was also differentiated and defined by its embrace of the human figure. The exhibition, more clearly in the catalogue than on the Smart's walls, clearly indicates the figurative nature of the Monster Roster (the name wasn't coined until late in its run, in 1959, by artist and critic Franz Schulze, who would also later coin the term 'Imagism'). And the figure was part of its identity; it's always been part of Chicago's art identity, from

figure as mistaken, and its pursuit of primordial instincts and primitivism as a sham.

Golub—and his work dominates this exhibition in number and scale—brought his commitment to the figure to the studio every day, and in work after work here you see human existence as an unending struggle against long odds, the body as a battered instrument of victimization, with the urge to survive one of its few ongoing dignities. The canvas becomes something to scrape and scumble and attack, and as the 1950s proceeded, color becomes something dolloped out so parsimoniously as to be conspicuous by its near absence; early works such as *The Courtesans* (c. 1950), or the later, monumental *Reclining Youth* of 1959 exhibit his developing probing nature, the

**"The aspect of the Monster Roster that was somewhat unexpected to us was the force that WWII exerted on virtually all of the artists' work," says Corbett. "So the deep psychological element, which of course also relates to all sorts of other things like Freudian psychoanalysis, Greek and Roman mythology, and existential philosophy, is rooted in a palpable sense of anxiety and dread. That portentousness germinated in the direct experience of the war for many of the artists, and in the terrifying fear of nuclear annihilation that was a prevalent part of American daily life in the '50s."**

Albright to Golub and onward, the human figure under stress (variously psychological, sexual, emotional, comedic, and yes, existential) is the touchstone of Chicago painting and sculpture. In a 1955 article for the *College Art Journal* ("A Critique of Abstract Expressionism"), Golub had what must have seemed the provincial audacity and disloyalty to throw a gauntlet at New York School abstraction, challenging New York's abjuration of the human

earlier work a search through the sensuous tactility of paint, the latter more a physical assault on canvas. Golub continues the several-thousand-year-old tradition of the centrality of the human form, even if now it often appears concussed and bereft. The show also offers several versions of the charnel house horrors of Cosmo Campoli's still mesmerizing sculpture *Birth of Death*, (all c. 1950), and Nancy Spero's



paintings were great to see, and among the surprises of the exhibition was how good and terrifically creepy Fred Berger's paintings are.

But was the Monster Roster an art movement? Or was it rather just a shared vocabulary, as so often happens in a particular place at a particular time: you know, ideas are floating around and different artists pick them up for a bit. The curators acknowledge that this is an open question. Unlike the Imagists, who did eventually regularly exhibit together, almost universally shared a dealer (Phyllis Kind) and had the support and attentions of a great critic and curator (Dennis Adrian locally, and on the national scene, Walter Hopps), the Monster Roster had none of that. Even the movement wasn't named until it was practically over, and there are artists displayed here together who barely knew one another. But the curators convincingly draw these artists together visually and philosophically, so if it wasn't a movement before, it now probably is.

One thing that did unite them perhaps, if only loosely, was a shared attitude of fearlessness. "Working on the exhibition, we were struck by how exploratory and even experimental the artists were," says Corbett. "Sometimes experimentation is cast as something exclusive to abstraction, but in the context of a figurative practice, you only need to consider Golub's scraped and gnawed surfaces, the unconventional plastic wood and pliable polymers used by Di Meo and Halkin, and the washy near-monochrome black paintings of Spero, to sense how fearless they were, from a formal, material, and technical perspective."

The Monster Roster ended by the artists moving on, some of them physically—Golub and Spero moved to Paris in 1959, and then to New York in 1964; Westermann headed for Connecticut in 1961, Irving Petlin left before that, June Leaf too—and some of them stylistically, setting in motion what Franz Schulze once called "the sorriest time in Chicago Art that I can remember, the early and mid 1960s," identifying the period just before the Imagists began to emerge. Schulze continues: "The energy of the 1950s had begun to wane... and things began to die a little in the early 1960s. People questioned whether there was such a thing as a 'Chicago School' at all." Some of the artists in this exhibition too have passed away, Evelyn Statsinger as recently as February 13 this year (there are 16 artists on view, a few just by a single work; 7 are living).

But that would end with the events of 50 years ago. At the end of this Monster Roster exhibition, the Smart Museum installed a room of Chicago Imagism from its permanent collection, with works by Roger Brown, Art Green, Gladys Nilsson, Ed Paschke, Christina Ramberg and Suellen Rocca. All these also exhibit the human figure under stress, but it's a kind of Pop and electric stress, funny, upbeat, rich in vernacular culture references, with not a whiff of the charnel house or existential despair, tongue in cheek instead of knife in heart. Walking from the Monster Roster into the Imagists you get that brightening feeling you experience when you walk through an encyclopedic museum and transition from, say, the 1970s into the 1980s, that you're moving from the modern to the contemporary. But before they dispersed for good, the figures of the Monster Roster had, in channeling an anxious zeitgeist, laid the seeds for what was to come. Looking back to see these diverse young artists grappling so urgently with the anxieties of the age, reminds us of how dark it was before that light appeared.



Andy Berg, Oneiros, (detail), 2015, mixed media on panel, 24" x 19"

## THAT WAS THEN THIS IS NOW

Andy Berg  
Mark Villarreal

April 23 - June 4, 2016



Mark Villarreal, Venetian Painting No. 3, (detail), 2015, oil on panel, 76.75" x 36"

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# CERAMICS IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

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What does it mean to be a ceramic artist in the 21st century? It's a good question, and one big enough that we didn't feel we could answer it ourselves. So for this special, ceramic-themed Dialogue, **art ltd.** approached five figures deeply committed to the field of ceramic art: three leading artist/educators who run ceramic programs in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago, a curator from Tempe, AZ, and a museum founder in Pomona, CA. We asked: what do you think of the state of contemporary ceramics? How is the field changing, and how is your own program and practice reflecting that reality? What does it mean to work in ceramics in the 21st century?

## **Nathan Lynch (Chair, Ceramics, California College of the Arts, San Francisco)**

It's an energetic, magical and chaotic time for ceramics. Everything is open. There's no distinction for an artist between art and craft, unless they find that language useful in defining their territory. There's no problem making sculpture *and* making pots or making pots as sculpture or writing a story about the shards. Everybody and their mother want to pinch their own coffee cup now. It's a two-part phenomenon—one part is the back-to-the-hand movement (see knitting nation and handcrafted whiskey). The second part is that the art world loves clay. I like that Sterling Ruby, Shio Kusaka and John Mason were all in the Whitney together. Why? It complicates the visual field for this material. I am proud Ron Nagle took his tiny wonders and dominated the big space at Matthew Marks. I want ceramics to be as wide open, strange and far reaching as possible.

At California College of the Arts (CCA) we take the West Coast tradition of rule breaking seriously, crafting a distinctive ceramics program that is often more experimental, interdisciplinary and performative than others. As the most intellectually promiscuous program at the college, we will partner or collaborate with everyone—the painters, sculptors, social-practicers, architects, designers, geologists and writers. We welcome them all into the studio to pinch and tell stories and reframe the field. I am currently most excited by work from Matt Wedel, Julia Haft-Candell, Michael Rey, Ehren Tool and Del Harrow, but there is plenty of other work that is equally strange and wonderful. For East Coast love, dig into the exhibition program at Greenwich House Pottery including shows by Paul Sacaridiz, Mathew McConnell and Linda Lopez. I have deep gratitude for my mentors Ken Price and Ron Nagle, but also to my contemporaries Theaster Gates and Michael Swaine who stretch us, stretch ceramics in a whole new direction. I know we are doing well when someone says, "That is not ceramics."

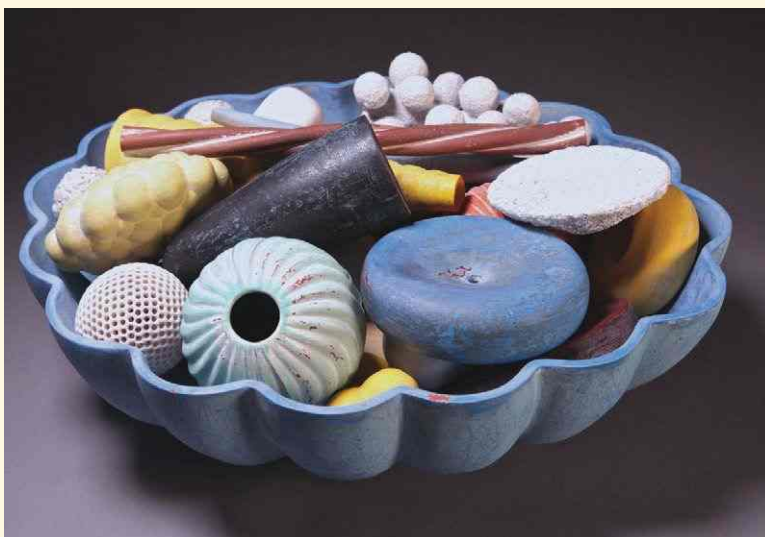
## **Tony Marsh (Program Head, Ceramic Arts, California State University, Long Beach)**

Much of the ceramic art created in the 21st century being celebrated widely is made by artists who were not trained in the field. Artists using clay today no longer need to reference the history of ceramics or to run all of their ideas through one material, the way we did much more routinely in the 20th century. Artists whose work is based in socially relevant themes can see that ceramics is a loaded device with a deep cultural history to draw on. Clay is simply a unique material that records beautifully and possess its own, very unique aesthetic language, making it a very attractive material.

De-skilling is a strategy employed by some working with clay to remove the look of care, to shift the discussion and the price tag that is frequently associated with Craft. To be a crafter is to pursue the betterment of culture, to look back lovingly and to reassure. To make art is to critique, subvert, question, to create doubt and move forward. These two forces at play in our expanding field are often being engaged side by side, with similar materials, processes and equipment in the same studio, where they frequently crossover.

The field of ceramic art is not widely practiced as a highly intellectual artistic pursuit. Many people are drawn to working with clay because it offers a physical, sensual experience. It is both a natural and mysterious transformational art-making material.

The Ceramic Arts Program at CSULB is a beehive. Faculty, students and professional artists all come together to create within the footprint of our facility. We help each other. Altogether, it models assorted artistic behaviors for our students in real time—all teach, all learn.





## **Katherine Ross (Professor/Chair, Ceramics, School of the Art Institute of Chicago)**

The boundaries of ceramics in the 21st century are permeable and fluid, equal to, influencing, and influenced by all other forms of art. Many young ceramic artists are letting go of the traditions (rules) of Craft and taste: perhaps out of boredom, but often irreverently and boldly embracing humor, materiality, or color, and taking cues from everything around them. These new artists no longer hesitate at challenging the boundaries of content, discipline or media.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago has never required study majors. Ceramics students have always and often combined disciplines. Recently, many painters, sculptors, performance artists, and film/video/new media artists have heavily involved ceramics in their practice. New interests in ceramics examine the failures of poorly functioning vessels as content. Social practice and site-specific work address the histories of place and allow others to find a voice through the use of clay. Ceramic artists are using color conceptually as developed in the painting traditions.

Artists commonly question taste, the art market, skill, and even how we see and accept objects in our world. For example, Sterling Ruby has introduced a level of rudeness in ceramics that challenges craft tradition. Ben DeMott's work questions both taste and permanence, while Nicole Seisler and Charlie Schneider embrace the social and cultural implications of memory and place. My own work incorporates a comparison of the psychological and behavioral function of objects within our social construct to the survival behaviors of animals, such as a mule, when confronting ceramic objects. The traditional ceramic process, its form and function, appears to be less important to many current ceramic artists than the materiality of the earth-borne material, and its poetic, subconscious, or overt psychological relevance.

## **David Armstrong (Founder, American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, CA)**

Recognition of ceramics in the field of fine art in the United States has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. A major influence to this change took place in the latter half of the 20th century, when the medium of ceramics was chosen by a few artists as a vehicle for fine art expression. Peter Voulkos and Robert Arneson were two of the American artists that pioneered the field, and carried ceramics beyond Craft, into the realm of fine art. Today, artists who express themselves using ceramics as their chosen art medium can work in a field that is more broadly entwined with other fine art fields than ever before. At the same time, more and more museums throughout the United States are now recognizing that ceramics can be used as a legitimate art medium. Most of these museums have very nice collections of ceramics, but unfortunately many of these collections are stored away and, in the past, were very seldom put on view. Now that lack of recognition is changing and many of our country's museums are bringing out their collections of ceramics for the public to enjoy, embracing them both for their own traditions and as part of a broader cultural discourse.

The American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, California, is dedicated to the exhibition, preservation and creation of ceramic art. Since its opening 11 years ago, the museum has used its programming to examine the range of practices that make up this ever-evolving fine art medium. In exhibitions of artists such as Paul Soldner, Don Reitz, Robert Sperry and Patti Warashina, AMOCA has highlighted the artistic talents of some of the many artists who are pushing the field forward, contributing to the medium's diversity. Truly, ceramics has become a significant fine art medium for artists of the 21st century, pushing it to new inspiring and unexpected directions.

## **Peter Held (Former Curator of Ceramics, Arizona State University Art Museum)**

As artists strive to make sense of an increasingly complex world, contemporary ceramists have increasingly engaged with the wider world. Globalization, coupled with economic and political upheavals, cannot help but influence today's cultural landscape. These factors force the artist to redefine the role of the studio ceramic artist in the 21st century. Younger generations of clay artists are tech savvy; they control their markets by promoting their art through websites, social media, and crowdsourcing. They erect their own structures of communication and distribution, with horizontal rather than vertical hierarchies. Many seek connectedness through working with collectives, DIY communities, and alternative sales outlets.

During the last decade, the world of ceramics has expanded at warp speed. Increasingly it escapes the rigid boundaries of Craft. The field is being redefined and engaged with the wider worlds of visual arts and design. The medium of clay has witnessed dramatic swings in studio practice, the marketplace, academia, collecting, and presenting since the advent of the postwar craft movement. We have valued our histories and embraced our successes. But with each successive generation of artists, new ideas and technologies rewrite our future. Amidst innumerable challenges and opportunities, artists awaken paths towards new discoveries, foreshadowing increased individual and collective stability.

Artists' sensitivity towards clay, infused with intellectual substance, allows them to become effective communicators who shed light on our past, present and future. The trajectory of their forward path is inextricably woven into their lives outside the studio. Although in a state of flux, often thrown off-center, the ceramics field resides in a fertile moment. What is it about this material that bonds us all today, with all its historical and cultural connotations and closeness to our everyday lives? It is bewitching, revealing itself in many guises. The medium, with its manifest historical and cultural connotations is transformative. Unencumbered by language, reaching across civilizations, clay reveals to me the possibility of a more linked humanity.

PREVIOUS PAGE, CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT:

INSTALLATION VIEW, "MUCK: ACCUMULATIONS, ACCRETIONS AND AGGREGATIONS," ASU ART MUSEUM, CURATED BY **Peter Held**. THE 2014 EXHIBITION FEATURED CERAMIC SCULPTURE BY SUSAN BEINER, NATHAN CRAVEN, MICHAEL FUJITA, DAVID HICKS, ANNABETH ROSEN, MEGHAN SMYTHE AND MATT WEDEL  
PHOTO: CRAIG SMITH

"SOME GUESTS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS," 2014, **Nathan Lynch**  
CERAMIC, GLAZE, CHARCOAL, 20" x 18" x 14"  
PHOTO: JOHN JANCA COURTESY RENA BRANSTEN PROJECTS

"THE SUBJECTIVE MEADOW," 2014, **Katherine Ross**  
VIDEO STILL

"RADIANCE & ABUNDANCE SERIES," 2012, **Tony Marsh**  
EARTHENWARE, 23" ACROSS

"UNTITLED PLATTERS," 1980, **Robert Sperry**  
CERAMIC  
COLLECTION OF DAVID ARMSTRONG AND RANDALL WELTY  
AS SEEN IN THE CURRENT SHOW AT AMOCA, "LINEAGE: MENTORSHIP & LEARNING"  
PHOTO: COURTESY AMOCA

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**Christina Winograd**

*Good Morning, 2015*



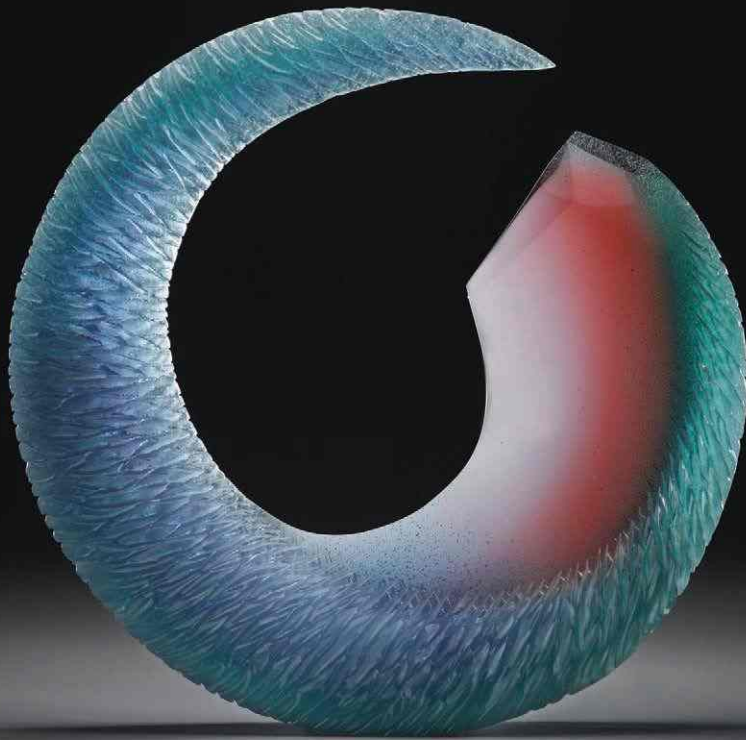
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JULIE BLACKMON, *Pool*, 2015

*The Photograph*  
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## CRITIC'S PICKS: DALLAS

By John Zotos

**Jeff Zilm** is an abstract painter and a veritable film addict; his show at the relatively new ANDNOW Gallery will showcase this obsession with celluloid. Zilm uses 8, 16, and 35mm film stock as a starting point, subsequently breaking the material down with detergent in order to liquefy the emulsion and mix it with acrylic paint. This new medium is then used to paint large-scale abstract monochromes that have a moody and sublime character. He both sprays and brushes the emulsion onto canvas, forming an alternating surface texture that reveals hints of depth and layering. He reserves the material culled from a single reel to make one unique painting, this conceptually transforms the entire film into a new creation. In a way the painting *is* the movie, but in a new form. Something almost alchemical is at work here in the transformation from a perishable and fragile medium like film, which fades with time, into a painting that will survive for centuries assuming the proper conditions are maintained. Zilm undoubtedly wants the viewer to ponder the impending loss of countless films languishing in studio vaults that will never go through restoration and digital preservation; as such, his art signifies an intervention in film history.

Jeff Zilm's new work will be on view at ANDNOW gallery, April 16 – May 21, 2016.

"THE KLEPTOMANIAC," 2014

**Jeff Zilm**

ACRYLIC EMULSION, GELATIN EMULSION ON CANVAS

72" x 54"

PHOTO: COURTESY ANDNOW



Words like ponderous and visually immersive aptly describe **Natasha Bowdoin's** site-specific sculpture, which will be featured in an upcoming show at Talley Dunn Gallery. Her colorful wall sculptures composed of cut paper and latex have the power to pull the viewer down the rabbit hole, much like Alice, in Lewis Carroll's story. His texts, among other writers', have actually inspired previous pieces, as Bowdoin draws inspiration from literary works and seeks to explore their intersection with the visual realm. Her massive installations, verging on the abstract, will share the gallery with the intimate bronze sculptures of **Linda Ridgway**, whose art deals in memory and depictions of nature, and also finds inspiration in literature. Her unique cast bronze pieces are delicate, intricate formations derived from leaves, branches and reeds.

"BLOOM," 2015

**Natasha Bowdoin**

SITE-SPECIFIC SCULPTURAL INSTALLATION

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND TALLEY DUNN GALLERY

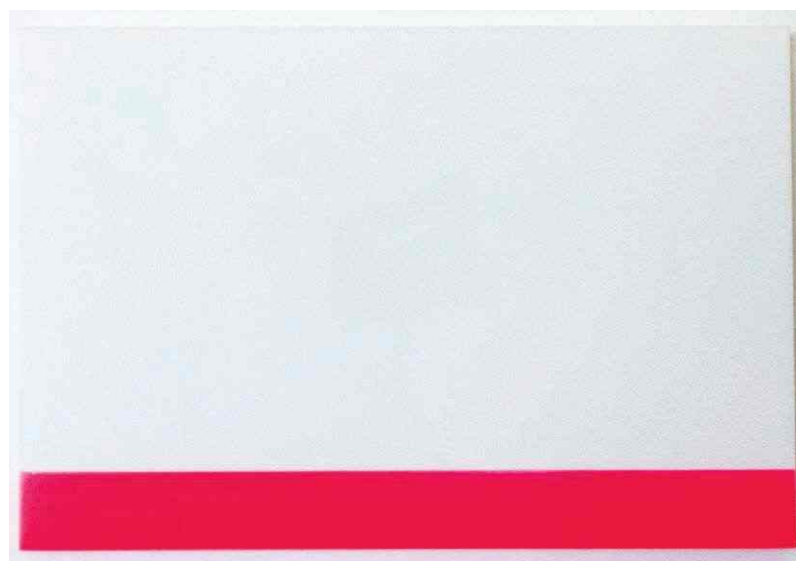


Wall-mounted, these works often evoke emotional states, sometimes directly quoting the poetry of Robert Frost, for example. Where Ridgway's influence can be found in modernist sculpture, specifically Giacometti, Bowdoin's practice and techniques flow from the historical avant-garde's desire to deconstruct language and uncover new contexts. As her work has expanded in scope in recent years, the literary text shows up less and less directly, suggesting the clear pre-dominance of the visual; this is a show not to be missed.

"Natasha Bowdoin: Spelboken" and "Linda Ridgway: The Sound of Trees," can be seen at Talley Dunn Gallery, April 1 – May 14, 2016.



"LITTLE BEAR", 2015, **Linda Ridgway**  
BRONZE IN TWO PARTS, UNIQUE, 18" x 21" x 9½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND TALLEY DUNN GALLERY



For an experience of brilliant color in three dimensions, look no further than Liliana Bloch Gallery, in the design district, where the sculpture of **Lynne Harlow** will be on view this April. Harlow arrives at her minimal and spare visual vocabulary through a process of reduction that suggests a kind of "less is more" sensibility. She considers her sculptures as both objects in themselves and as architectural interventions, in this case using the exterior wall of the gallery as the platform to install a site-specific design. At once colorful and spare, her pieces are intended to attract the eye in the formation of a visual dialogue that includes the interaction of light with the pieces and the spaces they occupy. Through the use of fluorescent plexiglass, vinyl, acrylic paint, and anodized aluminum, Harlow designs stunning installations that channel some elements of Minimalism and the interactive aspect of Op and Kinetic art. Visitors will experience a visual sensation that proceeds beyond the merely static one-point perspective in viewing art that demands to be seen through multiple lines of site. Perhaps this may include not only walking around a particular piece, but also inside or through it. Here, visitors to the gallery participate in a way that completes Harlow's project.

Lynne Harlow, "Hey Sunshine," will be on view at Liliana Bloch Gallery, April 2 – May 7, 2016.

A challenging exhibition that sets off the interplay between art and ideas resides in the work of **Sybrene Renema** at Cydonia Gallery, also in the design district. This young gallery has logged a steady track record of mounting cutting edge shows by talented artists on an international scale. Renema, born in the Netherlands, now lives and works in Glasgow; he definitely fits the definition of a multi-disciplinary artist whose painting, drawing, video, and installation pieces tackle historical constructs like institutions, museums, science, and travel, through an obsession with the romantic century. Themes drawn from 19th-century Romanticism, like dream states, ruins, decay, hallucinogens, passion, and the bittersweet passing of time are Renema's playground. For this exhibition he ruminates on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan* (completed in 1797, published 1816) and the associated use of opium that played a part in its creation. Through casting 800-1000 life-size ceramic poppies he puts his obsession with the literature into action through large-scale installation, sculpture, and multiples. As a whole the exhibition has an open-ended aspect suggestive of incompleteness—a reference to Coleridge's failure to finish the poem. Dualities are firmly at play in that the beauty of the ceramic poppies represents their promise of seductive dreams tinged with addiction and mortality.

"Sybrene Renema: The Harvest of Leisure," runs April 9 – June 4, 2016 at Cydonia Gallery.

ABOVE:  
"LOOKING AT THE SUN," 2016, **Lynne Harlow**  
ACRYLIC PAINT ON PLEXIGLAS, 11½" x 18" x ½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY LILIANA BLOCH GALLERY

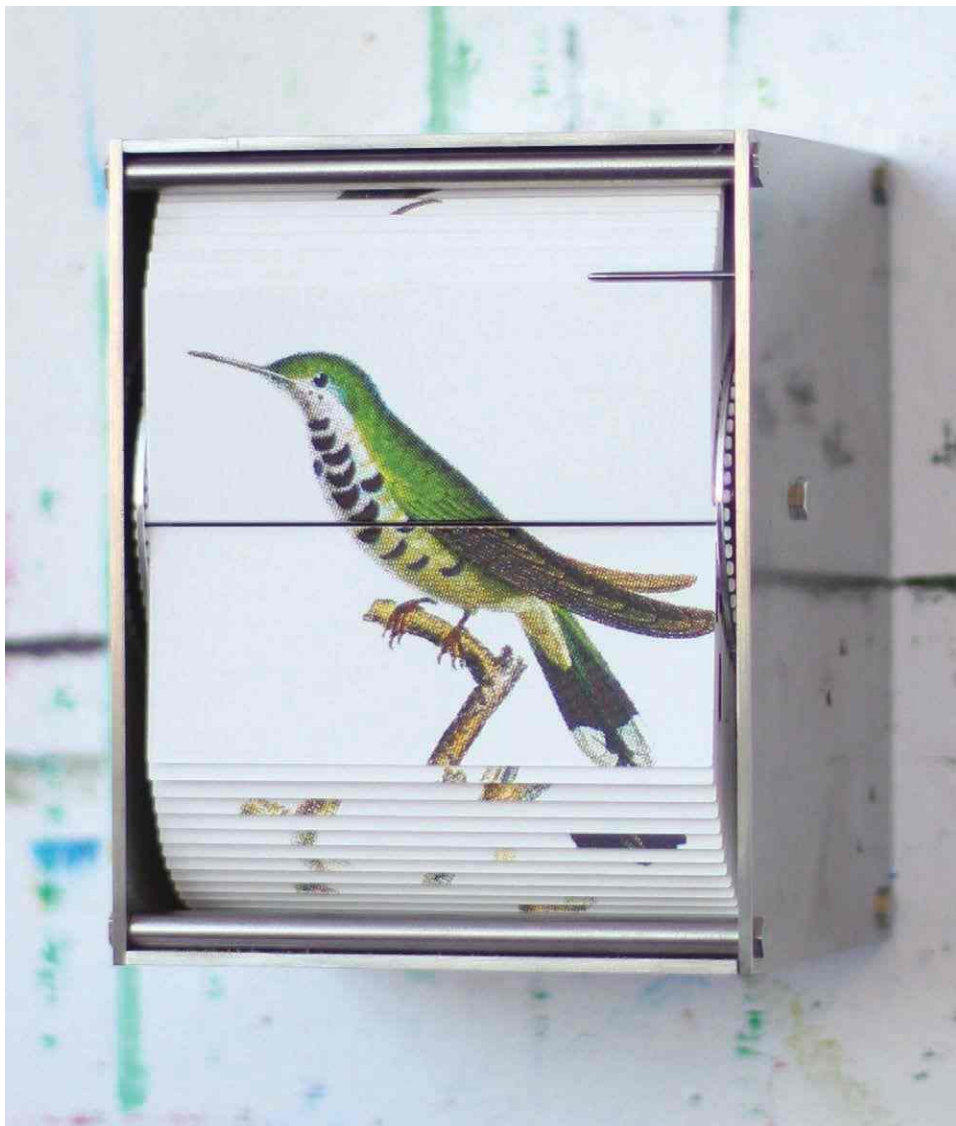
LEFT:  
"MOUNTAIN 119," 2014, **Sybrene Renema**  
COLLAGE, 16½" x 23"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CYDONIA



Mechanical objects, movement, and how they play off of the natural world captivate **Juan Fontanive**. Profoundly interested in the place where these ideas interact as art, the Brooklyn-based artist creates kinetic installations of ceiling-mounted mobiles, propelled into motion with visible cables, pulleys and engines. Even better, he also puts the machines to work by applying the motion to images that change on a rotating basis: these “flipbooks,” as he calls them, will be on view in his solo show at Conduit Gallery. In the *Ornithology* flipbook series, his subject is the flying motion of colorful birds as their wings flutter. Fontanive designs and constructs these diorama-like contraptions by using old-fashioned analog technology. The works are housed in a stainless steel casing fitted with a motor and electronics that rotate four-color screen prints, simulating motion, not unlike animated cartoons. More directly, they reference film projection in both their sound and the way the images flow vertically. In this case, though, the point is to make sure the viewer sees and enjoys the obviousness of the operation. If it were too polished and seamless the effect would be ruined. These works are fascinating expressions of kinetic art that animates the mechanically produced screen prints of a creature of nature—quite an interaction.

“Juan Fontanive: Colorthings” will be on display at Conduit Gallery from April 2 – May 7, 2016.

“ORNITHOLOGY I,” 2016, **Juan Fontanive**  
4-COLOR SCREEN PRINT ON BRISTOL PAPER,  
STAINLESS STEEL, MOTOR AND ELECTRONICS  
4¼" x 5" x 3¾"  
PHOTO: COURTESY CONDUIT GALLERY



For a heady dose of process and pattern, new work by **Linnea Glatt** at Barry Whistler Gallery delivers the goods. Her line-driven works on paper in various sizes channel Minimalism and may resemble the work of Agnes Martin. Martin often drew with graphite; by contrast, Glatt achieves her composition with the use of colored thread woven into the paper. These pieces are beautifully executed, full of texture, and resonate with moods that range from the tranquil to the cosmic, nearly catapulting the viewer into the infinite. When installed in groups, the delicate serial imagery is repetitive and soothing. Usually they are executed in neutral monochromatic colors; every so often she surprises with blue or red, never really mixing different colors together. Her threads form different shapes and patterns that evoke quiet contemplation. From a distance, what looks like a point reveals itself as a line on the surface. In some pieces, Glatt intensifies the concentration of line and thread to create volume. This allows her to investigate how her thread measures up to, and contends with, the flat surface of the paper. Through her art, Glatt proposes an alternative to current trends that depend on digital, flashy and tedious techniques. Slow down and take the time to breathe it in.

At Barry Whistler Gallery, from April 9 – May 28, 2016.

“INCREASE/DECREASE,” 2016, **Linnea Glatt**  
THREAD, 11 UNITS EACH MEASURING 7½"  
PHOTO: KEVIN TODORA  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND BARRY WHISTLER GALLERY

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## KANSAS CITY NCECA celebrates its 50th anniversary by bringing a veritable festival of ceramics to KC.

Whether it's high art sculpture, cups and plates, or hipster bongos, Kansas City is about to become the national destination for ceramic art of any variety. The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) is hosting its 50th Anniversary Conference in KC this March, and with it dozens of events and thousands of artists, educators, collectors and enthusiasts. In addition to four days of conference events at Bartle Hall Convention Center, from March 16-19, there are about 40 galleries, museums, colleges, non-profits and other groups hosting over 60 different exhibitions of ceramic art and there are another 11 exhibitions in the nearby city of Lawrence, Kansas. But that's just the NCECA approved programming. Plenty of other galleries, studios and groups will be jumping on board with their own unsanctioned events.

Liz Lerman will give the conference's keynote address. An unusual choice, Lerman is not a ceramicist, but instead a dancer, choreographer, educator and writer. Lerman's address will explain her educational theory called "Critical Response Process," followed by a participatory event where attendees will try out her ideas. Building on the keynote address, there will be dozens of other lectures with titles like "Digital Applications in Ceramic Pedagogy," "Mini-Heat: a small-scale, fast fire wood kiln," and "Who Am I?"

The conference itself will take place at Bartle Hall in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. A KC landmark, Bartle Hall is an unusual modernist building, roughly eight football fields in length, it spans north to

south and over a sunken highway interchange. On top of the convention center are four giant metal and concrete pylons, each adorned with modernist aluminum sculptures by R.M. Fischer, titled "Sky Stations." In the 20 years since the sculptures were installed, KC has recast itself as an art city. Looking at these enormous and unnecessary spires jutting out of Bartle Hall, you immediately get the message: Kansas City is a modern metropolis and it has the art to prove it.

NCECA would seem to agree. When asked about why they picked Kansas City, conference organizers explained, "NCECA chose Kansas City because of its important place in the American studio ceramics movement especially since the end of WWII," and that "The region remains rich with some of the best public and private collections of ceramic art and high caliber educational programs that continue to draw talent and encourage it to establish a base of creative production."

ABOVE:  
"NASA CHAWAN," 2012, **Tom Sachs**  
PORCELAIN WITH ENGOBE INLAY, 2½" x 3½" x 3½"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF BALDWIN GALLERY

"WHITE CUT CHARGER," 2015  
**Jeremy Briddell**  
CERAMIC, 27" DIAMETER  
PHOTO: COURTESY HAW CONTEMPORARY









Most of those collections, studios, schools and galleries are just south of the Bartle Hall in the Crossroads Arts District, and almost all of them are getting involved in the NCECA conference. At the Belger Arts Center and Belger Crane Yard Studios, there will be numerous exhibitions of artwork by resident artists and alumni. The Crane Yard will have an exhibition by renowned local painter, sculptor and entrepreneur Peregrine Honig, along with Beth Cavener, Jenny Kindler and Lindsay Pichaske. Called "Objectify," the exhibition features sculptures that use animals as social, political and environmental metaphors.

Some of KC's biggest and oldest galleries will be hosting official NCECA events. The Charlotte Street Foundation's La Esquina will have "Across the Table, Across the Land," featuring artists engaging in socially oriented art projects on the topics of food, community and activism. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, the Kansas City Artists Coalition will host "Aesthetic Influence: The Art of Chinese Scholar Rocks" with a ceramic interpretation of the ornamental rocks' thousand-plus-year legacy.



The Leedy-Voulkos Art Center will host three official NCECA exhibitions: the "NCECA 2016 Emerging Artist Exhibition," the "National Student Juried Exhibition," and the "Shapers of the Field: NCECA Honors and Fellows" which will include artwork by the venerable 85-year-old ceramic artist Jim Leedy himself. "He's the last of a generation of abstract sculptors who really pushed the boundaries of clay," says his daughter and gallery director, Stephanie Leedy. "He and his generation really laid the groundwork for ceramics studio art in America."

As a professor at the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI) for over 40 years, and a one-time honorary NCECA member, it makes sense to host exhibitions of both veteran and student artwork at the space Leedy founded. Though, having the largest floor plan of any KC gallery also helps. Founded 31 years ago in the old Folgers Coffee factory, the gallery was named after Leedy's friend and fellow ceramics pioneer Peter Voulkos. The space contains both galleries and private live/work spaces on the top floor, studios coveted by emerging and veteran KC artists.

"They call him the godfather of the Crossroads," says the artist's granddaughter and Leedy-Voulkos gallery manager Erin Woodworth. "Before my grandfather created this gallery, so many of his students would graduate and leave for New York or LA. Before the city officially renamed this neighborhood the Crossroads, everyone just called it Leedyville."

Further south of the Crossroads and Leedyville is Midtown, home to KC's oldest art institutions. The Kansas City Art Institute will be holding exhibitions of student and alumni artwork across many of its campuses galleries. The school's associated gallery, the H&R Block Artspace, will be exhibiting Simone Leigh's ceramic and video installations in "I ran to the rock to hide my face the rock cried out no hiding place," addressing topics in African art, ethnography, folk art, and the female body.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, an enormous public collection of ancient, classical, modern and contemporary art, is exhibiting the "NCECA 2016 Invitational: Unconventional Clay: Engaged in Change."

TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM:

"KEPT (VARIATION IN SMOKE)," 2015, **Beth Cavener**  
RESIN INFUSED REFRACTORY MATERIAL, PAINT, ROPE, WOODEN BASE  
24" x 12" x 28"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

"COLLECTIVE IDENTITY—THE LEGACY OF APPRENTICESHIP  
UNDER TOSHIKO TAKAEZU" AT HAW CONTEMPORARY, **Geoff Booras**

"GONE A," 2013, **Arlene Shechet**  
GLAZED CERAMIC, GLAZED KILN SHELF, STEEL BASE  
59¼" x 20¼" x 20½"  
PHOTO: ALAN WIENER  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SIKKEMA JENKINS & CO., NEW YORK,  
© ARLENE SHECHET



Curated collaboratively by NCECA members and museum curators, the show will feature a variety of experimental multimedia artists who use clay, alongside video, installation, 3D modeling and social activism. Nearby, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art will be hosting "A Whisper of Where It Came From," a six-person exhibition featuring luminaries Sterling Ruby and Arlene Shechet, exploring contemporary multi-media practices that push the medium far beyond traditional associations. Further south, the eccentric National Museum of Toys and Miniatures, will be exhibiting works from the largest collection of fine-scale, aka very tiny, miniatures, including ceramics and ceramic toys.

In addition to the city's institutions and nonprofits, a range of the city's galleries will also hold NCECA-related programming. Garcia Squared, established by Israel Garcia in 2011 to introduce the work of national and international Latino artists to the Kansas City scene, will present "From the Wheel to the Wall," organized by Robert Lugo, exploring the unlikely intersection of graffiti and ceramics. Down in the West Bottoms, an old industrial railyard district, collaborative venue Plug Projects will be showing Atlanta-based Christina West's jarring polychromatic figurative works juxtaposed with works by Joey Watson, a graduate of KCAI who incorporates newer technologies into his fabrication strategies. About a block east, Haw Contemporary promotes two shows highlighting the legacy of iconic figures Toshiko Takaezu and Ken Ferguson through the work of their associates and mentees. The work and legacy of Ferguson in particular, a founding member of NCECA who served as chairman of the ceramics department at KCAI for over 30 years, will be a unifying theme throughout the NCECA exhibitions, with works on view at Leedy-Voulkos, Belger, KCAI, Alice C. Sabatini Gallery, Bracker's Good Earth Clays, and The Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, in Sedalia, MO.

In addition to these larger, scheduled shows, many of Kansas City's younger artists will be hosting their own unsanctioned events, showcasing underground counterculture artists and the city's DIY movement. One such event, "Objet Weed-Craft Pop Up" will feature the work of the Objet collective, including event organizer Dean Roper's ceramic bongos and pipes in the shape of Cheetos, Pokémon, and other pop symbols. "The NCECA conference itself is not important to me at all," laughs Roper. "I am really interested in stirring up some ideas about what ceramics can be, and to inform people of some really amazing artists using clay that operate outside of the ceramics community."

In short, NCECA will be a big mess of contradictions. The conference lectures will attract teachers and theorists debating the future of art education, the galleries and bus tours will gather hundreds of wealthy and casual collectors, events like "Across the Table, Across the Land" will bring in more socially minded activists and organizers and everywhere there will be ceramicists, young and old, traditional and experimental, who want to share their work with the public.

"This will likely be the biggest art event that has ever happened in Kansas City," says Stephanie Leedy. "Ceramics has always had a foothold in Kansas City, primarily because of the Art Institute and all the prominent artists, teachers and students that have passed through it. We have such venues, so many art spaces, so close together. There isn't a better place to hold a national meeting of ceramicists."

—NEIL THRUN

TOP TO BOTTOM:  
"UNTITLED (CONVERSATION PIECE: LIPS & LEGS)," 2015

**Dustin Yager**

CERAMIC

PHOTO: PETER LEE, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

"RITUAL IMPLEMENTS FOR TWO," 2014, **Joey Watson**

COLOR PORCELAIN, 3D PRINTED ABS PLASTIC, CAST GLASS,  
MELAMINE, SEAT FOAM, ELECTRO-LUMINESCENT WIRE AND PRISMATIC PLASTIC  
30" x 30" x 20"

PHOTO: EG SCHEMPF, COURTESY PLUG PROJECTS

"NOIR BUISSON," 2015, **Rain Harris**

BLACK CLAY, WOOD, RESIN, METAL, 10½" x 10½" x 13½"

PHOTO: ROSS REDMON, COURTESY SHERRY LEEDY CONTEMPORARY ART





# NCECA - selected exhibitions



"CONTEMPORARY CONFLUENCE" AT FINE FOLK



"FOUNDATIONS: WORK BY FOUNDING MEMBERS OF NCECA" AT ALICE C. SABATINI GALLERY, TOPEKA, KS



"MIDDLE GROUND" AT THE WAREHOUSE

## nceca: north shuttle route

### MAR 16 - APR 23

**WHAT:** "Across the Table, Across the Land" explores clay's association with food and community. Curated by Michael Strand and Namita Wiggers.  
**WHERE:** Charlotte Street Foundation, La Esquina  
**INFO:** [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org)

### MAR 11 - APR 16

**WHAT:** "Legacy of an Icon - Ken Ferguson" one of two NCECA-related exhibitions, this group show consists of eight artists influenced by their relationship with the celebrated Kansas City-based ceramic artist. Also on view, March 15 - 19, "Collective Identity: The Legacy of Apprenticeship Under Toshiko Takaezu."  
**WHERE:** Haw Contemporary  
**INFO:** [www.hawcontemporary.com](http://www.hawcontemporary.com)

### MAR 15 - MAY 21

**WHAT:** Christina West blurs notions of public and private through large-scale figurative works in the exhibition titled, "Stay Asleep." Also on view: "Joey Watson: Lifted"  
**WHERE:** Plug Projects  
**INFO:** [www.plugprojects.com](http://www.plugprojects.com)

### MAR 16 - MAY 15

**WHAT:** "50 Women: A Celebration of Women's Contributions to Ceramics" curated by Alex Kraft and Anthony Merino.  
**WHERE:** American Jazz Museum  
**INFO:** [www.americanjazzmuseum.org](http://www.americanjazzmuseum.org)

### DATES RANGE THRU MAY 21

**WHAT:** A series of exhibitions showcasing the broad range of techniques and conceptual strategies employed by contemporary ceramic artists to engage a range of socio-political and environmental themes. Also on view, a trio of exhibitions highlight the legacies of ceramic programs including Red Star Studios and the Archie Bray Foundation.  
**WHERE:** Belger Crane Yard Studios  
**INFO:** [www.craneyardstudios.org](http://www.craneyardstudios.org)

### MAR 15 - 19

**WHAT:** A series of exhibitions exploring the impact of mentors, makers and generational collaborations.  
**WHERE:** Bredin-Lee Gallery  
**INFO:** [www.nceca.net](http://www.nceca.net)

### MAR 16 - MAY 21

**WHAT:** "Measured Space" a three-person show with works by Brian Caponi, Shawn Murray, and Thomas Schmidt that explore the materiality and construction techniques of clay.  
**WHERE:** Kansas City Public Library  
**INFO:** [www.kclibrary.org](http://www.kclibrary.org)

## nceca: central shuttle route

### MAR 4 - APR 30 / MAR 4 - 26 / MAR 4 - 26

**WHAT:** NCECA's 2016 Exhibitions: "2016 National Student Juried Exhibition," "Shapers of the Field: NCECA Honors and Fellows," and "NCECA 2016 Emerging Artists Exhibition."  
**WHERE:** Leedy-Voulkos Art Center  
**INFO:** [www.leedy-voulkos.com](http://www.leedy-voulkos.com)

### MAR 12 - 20

**WHAT:** "Contemporary Confluence" artists participating in a dialogue and exchange in ceramics between Foshan, China and Kansas City, USA.  
**WHERE:** Fine Folk  
**INFO:** [www.finefolk.com](http://www.finefolk.com)

### MAR 4 - APR 30

**WHAT:** "From the Wheel to the Wall" a group exhibition exploring the intersection between ceramics and graffiti.  
**WHERE:** Garcia Squared  
**INFO:** [www.garciasquared.com](http://www.garciasquared.com)

### MAR 16 - 19

**WHAT:** "InCiteful Clay" curated by Judith Schwartz a group exhibition of artists who use ceramic as a medium to critique contemporary issues.  
**WHERE:** Mid-America Arts Alliance, Culture Lab  
**INFO:** [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org)

### MAR 4 - APR 30

**WHAT:** "Image as Metaphor" with large-scale works by Ole Lislerud alongside Jim Leedy, Mac McClanahan, and Steve Pistone.  
**WHERE:** Todd Weiner Gallery  
**INFO:** [www.toddweinergallery.com](http://www.toddweinergallery.com)

### MAR 15 - 19

**WHAT:** "Materiality, Methodology, Metamorphosis" a group show exploring the influence of form and materiality on content, with Julia Haft-Candell (featured in the profiles section). Also showing, "Ghosts + Stooges" and "Standing Wave."  
**WHERE:** The Studios Inc  
**INFO:** [www.thestudiosinc.org](http://www.thestudiosinc.org)



"ACROSS THE TABLE, ACROSS THE LAND"

## nceca: south shuttle route

**MAR 15 - 19**

**WHAT:** "Middle Ground" examinations of place and landscape as an exploration of personal identity.

**WHERE:** The Warehouse, Kansas City Art Institute

**INFO:** [www.kcai.edu](http://www.kcai.edu)

**MAR 11 - AUG 14**

**WHAT:** "A Whisper of Where It Came From" six leading contemporary artists pushing beyond the traditional notions of ceramic art, including Huma Bhabha, Nicole Cherubini, Mark Cooper, Jiha Moon, Sterling Ruby and Arlene Shechet.

**WHERE:** Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

**INFO:** [www.kemperart.org](http://www.kemperart.org)

**THRU MAY 8**

**WHAT:** "Unconventional Clay: Engaged in Change" NCECA's 2016 invitational exhibition

**WHERE:** Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

**INFO:** [www.nelson-atkins.org](http://www.nelson-atkins.org)

## nceca: greater kc area

**THRU MAY 29**

**WHAT:** Two NCECA-related exhibitions currently on view: Christopher Russell: "Ceramics" and "Recent American Ceramics from the Collection" curated by Thomas Piché Jr.

**WHERE:** Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO

**INFO:** [www.daummuseum.org](http://www.daummuseum.org)



"CONTINUOUS EXCHANGE" AT EPSTEN GALLERY

**THRU APR 10**

**WHAT:** "Continuous Exchange" Site-specific works by Nathan Craven, Margaret Kinkeade and Casey Whittier.

**WHERE:** Epsten Gallery, Overland Park, KS

**INFO:** [www.epstengallery.org](http://www.epstengallery.org)

**THRU MAY 1**

**WHAT:** "Foundations: work by founding members of NCECA" including Paul Soldner, Peter Voulkos, Don Reitz, Ken Ferguson and others (pictured).

**WHERE:** Alice C. Sabatini Gallery, Topeka, KS

**INFO:** <https://tsopl.org/gallery>

**MAR 12 - MAY 14**

**WHAT:** "Now & Then" contemporary ceramic works that offer a means to investigate the inter-sections between art, culture, and daily life.

**WHERE:** Kansas City Museum, Kansas City

**INFO:** <http://kcmo.gov/kansascitymuseum/>

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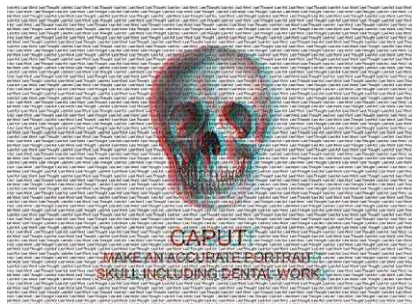
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**Red Slipper**

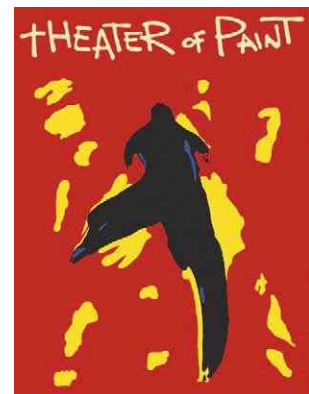
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In person in her Glassell Park studio, LA artist Julia Haft-Candell is an affable guide, walking casually among her variously scaled works-in-progress to make a point. But outside the studio, she is casting an increasingly large shadow these days as a ceramic artist. A few days earlier, she attended the opening of the 2016 Scripps College 72nd Ceramic Annual, for which she installed a large, wall-mounted work. Her stint at Scripps marked the tail end of a three-year teaching fellowship on campus, and the second year in a row that she's been involved with the influential Ceramic Annual; in 2015 she curated the exhibition. This winter she had

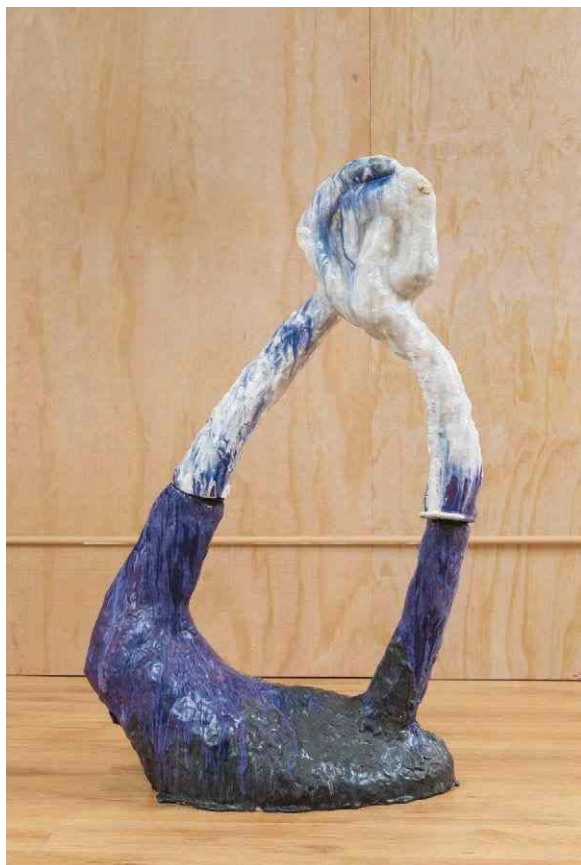
a show at Ochi Projects, an ambitious new LA gallery near Mid-City. Meanwhile, a visitor to the Art LA Contemporary fair could see two more large works by her on display. Luckily, that sort of multi-tasking seems to come naturally to the prolific artist. "I'm always working on more than one thing at one time," she says. "I like to keep myself busy, so there's always something to rotate around to do."

Assessing the off-kilter convocation in her studio of creations suggesting knots, ropes, combs, stalagmites, and other less discernable forms, Haft-Candell admits an attraction to "things that look a little strange, but in a good way." Indeed, one of her more identifiable traits is the works' willful indeterminacy, its ability to stake out indefinite, murky, or liminal areas between the abstract, the familiar and the weird. Referring to one of the works in her studio, she explains: "That one, I don't know what it is, I call it *Three-Legged Blob With Vase*. I feel the work is stronger when I balance it: something known with something not known," she adds.

Raised in Oakland, Haft-Candell got her start with ceramics as an undergraduate at UC Davis, studying under Annabeth Rosen, whom she cites as an influence. For her MFA, she joined the highly regarded ceramics program at CSU Long Beach, just as Kristen Morgin was leaving and Tony Marsh took over, both of whom she also notes appreciatively. Which perhaps goes to one of the many appealing dichotomies in her work: as quirky and individualistic as her works tend to be, they are clearly rooted in a profound appreciation of the medium and its more adventurous practitioners. She still speaks admiringly of the pioneers who shaped the field in the mid-late 20th century: Peter Voulkos, John Mason and Ken Price, drawing a distinction between today's more conceptual ceramic artists, who aren't necessarily trained in the medium, who just enjoy the clay for what it is, and those ceramic artists who really have a desire to push the material forward: a need to push the limits of the medium.

Clearly, it's an impulse she identifies with. Her experiential approach to clay deliberately allows for various flaws, imperfections and discoveries, then she invites those elements to transform the whole, following an intuitive path. Of the 2015 Ceramic Annual, she wrote, curating the show was "analogous to how I engage with my own sculptural practice: I bring together parts, that when assembled, merge into a complex whole... Sections may support, anchor, complement or contradict one another, but all are necessary to complete the composition."

For her show at Ochi Projects, she presented two large works, both determinedly twisty and linear in form. The first featured a gourd-like, swollen blue base suggesting a cartoony raised shoulder with two arms, which rose on each side to a white, knot-like element set on top. The other, also blue and white, lay sprawled across the floor, with flat colors and a pattern recalling diagonally joined bricks, its shape resembling a loosely knotted rope, or coiled snake, or pair of languid legs. While the vertical piece was in two halves, this one was in parts, which meshed unevenly, like ill-fitting puzzle pieces. Her Scripps piece, titled *Pretzel*, also features a bowl-like, fragmentary knot; mounted on the wall, it flaunted a grid-like pattern of black and white.



TOP:

"THREE-LEGGED BLOB WITH VASE," 2016  
WITH OTHER WORKS IN PROGRESS AT ARTIST'S STUDIO

BELOW:

"FORWARD LUNGE KNOT," 2016, CERAMIC, 45" x 27" x 13"  
PHOTO: COURTESY OCHI PROJECTS

For all their obvious heft, all these works betray Haft-Candell's fascination with linear form. "I've been very interested in the idea of making clay look like a knot. But I find it really hard to draw it in two dimensions," she says. So the built work becomes a form of problem solving, of translating the immediacy of drawing into clay. "The works have a snake feel, they still have this movement, in contrast with its heavy and static material," she notes approvingly. For the floor piece, "I wanted to sculpt, not just a knot, a braided knot... But it all had to be hollow so it's just sort of an illusion."

Ultimately, her works are doggedly authentic to their own materials and process, including all the scars and flaws that occur along the way. "My hand is always in all the work, I'm not trying to erase my touch on material," she states. "The process, the chinks that happen, the struggle, I like revealing that. I think it makes the work a little funny, and more personal, and relatable... They reveal some, but there's still a lot of questions about them." While the fragmentary nature of her pieces helps inform their open-ended, comparative process, it also serves another purpose. "I'm really interested in making large things in pieces, it gives me more freedom. In that I can lift them by myself, transport them, I can fire them in a small kiln if I want to, I'm not reliant on other people. It's kind of liberating."

Also noteworthy is the artist's subtle engagement with issues of gender. "In my view, the men are the ones making the big, heavy things, so I want to challenge that, add a feminine perspective to that," she says. "In the Ochi show, that braid, it felt like something girls do, something traditionally feminine, but done on a scale not traditionally feminine."

While she is clearly comfortable working in large-scale, those bulky pieces are just part of the story; in the studio, they are arranged along the wall like characters in a ceramic line-up, while a myriad of small, fist-sized, even more experimental works peer down from shelves. "I think it's really important for me to [work on] really different scales, from tiny to large... I think they have a very different feeling in relation to the body. Small could be monumental, and large could be precious and cute, all those things we associate with something miniature." Standing amid her works, she adds cheerfully, "I'm not convinced by the mid-sized."

—GEORGE MELROD

*"Julia Haft-Candell: Double Knot" was on display at Ochi Projects in Los Angeles. January 16 – February 20, 2016. [www.ochiprojects.com](http://www.ochiprojects.com)*

*Her work is also featured in "Beyond the Object: the 72nd Scripps Ceramic Annual," at Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College, in Claremont, CA. January 23 – April 3, 2016. [rcwg.scrippscollege.edu](http://rcwg.scrippscollege.edu)*

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The transition from living as part of an ethnic majority in El Paso, Texas, to becoming part of a Hispanic minority in the Pacific Northwest has offered both a challenge and an inspiration for ceramic sculptor George Rodriguez. With a new body of work on view at Foster/White Gallery in Seattle this spring, and a lecture demonstration later in mid-March at the annual NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) conference in Kansas City, Missouri, the 33-year-old graduate of University of Texas, El Paso and the University of Washington (MFA, 2009) is clearly on a roll.

Rodriguez's early work was characterized by large-scale, multi-figure sculptural installations, such as *Instrumental Divide* (2009); in subsequent years, these pieces have been joined by individual life-size figures and self-portraits like *Wanderer* (2011), along with various forays into table-top floral assemblages and functional tableware. Far from his West Texas roots, Rodriguez has adapted them by focusing on subjects drawn from his Chicano heritage, such as ceremonies, rituals and presentations, filtering in other inspirations gained as a result of a 10-month

global travel fellowship from the UW in 2010. During that span, he visited 26 countries on three continents.

"Some of my original inspirations will continue because I'm talking about personal experiences," the former Bonderman Travel Fellow observes, speaking from his home in the White Center neighborhood of Seattle. "For example, my mother was a seamstress, so I make dress sculptures. But now, after my trips to Bali, Taiwan and Thailand, I want to acknowledge cultures I am not a part of. I would love to show how I bring in those sensibilities to trace the difference between conquering them and honoring them."

Although Rodriguez is still processing the Bonderman trip, there are already signs of his neo-multicultural approach. For example, in a series of tableware objects shown at Kobo Gallery in Seattle in 2011, Japanese lotus blossoms ornamented a gravy boat. Elsewhere, a Buddhist monastic top-knot became the artist's hair-do in another self-portrait, *Guardian* (2014). *Calavera* (2014) applies skeleton "make-up" to the artist's face, recalling Mexican Day of the Dead skulls, while also suggesting tribal face painting from New Guinea and parts of Africa. Considering his own artistic influences, Rodriguez acknowledges in particular the late Robert Arneson, godfather of West Coast figurative ceramics. "Arneson used the mold of his own head for his self-portraits, and then altered them for many other figures, like Jackson Pollock. I did a similar thing with my 'George' series," he explains. "Instead of just me, I created many other Georges: George Washington, George Sand, and a Curious George."



Among the revelations from his *wanderjahr* was the primacy of ceramics in other countries' artistic culture. "There is a higher consciousness about clay in Asia than in the US," Rodriguez says. "It is everywhere. You can feel it. It is a connection point without the lower status." At the same time, he concedes that such traditions can be unduly binding, too. "Tradition is something you need to respect; you learn it, but then move on, lift it, and alter it," he continues. "Imagine a ceremonial object. You have it usable for, say, a procession. It could be for a smaller, everyday ceremony, not just a grand event. After all the treasures in museums that I saw, I'm more attached to the idea of 'What's behind the object?'"

Commenting on identity, he observes, "It's like when I was traveling, my appearances and ethnic identity were so fluid. Because I am fluent in Spanish, I could blend into Peru. At the Trujillo Museum north of Lima, the guard spoke to me and let me see the hidden erotic [Pre-Columbian] pieces. When I was in Asia, they thought I was Filipino or something, so I went along with that."

Besides his Foster/White exhibition, Seattle area viewers will have another chance to observe Rodriguez's ample skills at the important group show, "Beyond Aztlán: Mexican, Chicano and Chicana Artists in the Northwest," at Museum of Northwest Art (March 26 – June 12, 2016). Yet Rodriguez's vision is distinct enough that it transcends its subject matter, despite its seeming wit and keen observation. "The sculptures can be like a journal," he says. "I know humor catches people and then draws them in. I don't want to make a joke [like Arneson], I want to make it more than a joke. I think a lot about political and social commentary when I am working, but I think there's enough of it in other people's work, so I don't need to include it in mine."

—MATTHEW KANGAS

"Beneath the Surface," a show of works by George Rodriguez, will be on view at Foster/White Gallery in Seattle, from April 6 - 30, 2016. [www.fosterwhite.com](http://www.fosterwhite.com)

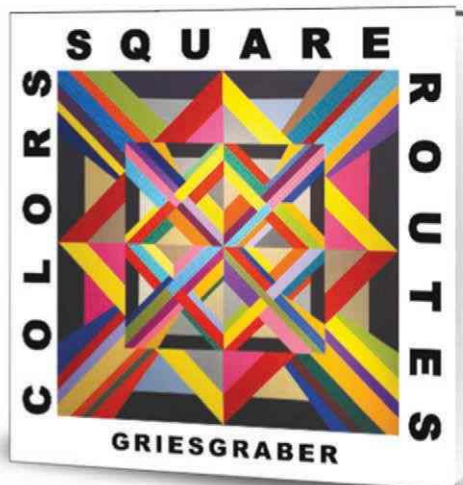
He will also be part of the group show, "Beyond Aztlán: Mexican & Chicana/o Artists in the Northwest," at Museum of Northwest Art, in La Conner, WA. March 26 – June 12, 2016. <http://monamuseum.org>

OPPOSITE:  
**George Rodriguez**

LEFT TO RIGHT:  
"GEORGE WITH FLOWERS," 2011  
CERAMIC WITH GLAZE, 21" X 13" X 16"

"CALAVERA," 2014  
CERAMIC WITH GLAZE, 18½" X 15" X 13"  
PHOTOS: COURTESY FOSTER / WHITE GALLERY

## The Exhibit That Begot The Book



Artist Michael Griesgraber's solo museum exhibition *Colors Square Route* inspired his book of hard-edge geometric paintings. The artist orchestrates ever-shifting color groupings and spatial readings that result in dynamic configurations that perpetually realign. The artist's vibrant works are paired with thoughts on color. Hardcover: 9"x 9", 158 pages.



Amazon.com / Barnes & Noble / [www.artistbook.me](http://www.artistbook.me)  
Selected Museum Book Shops



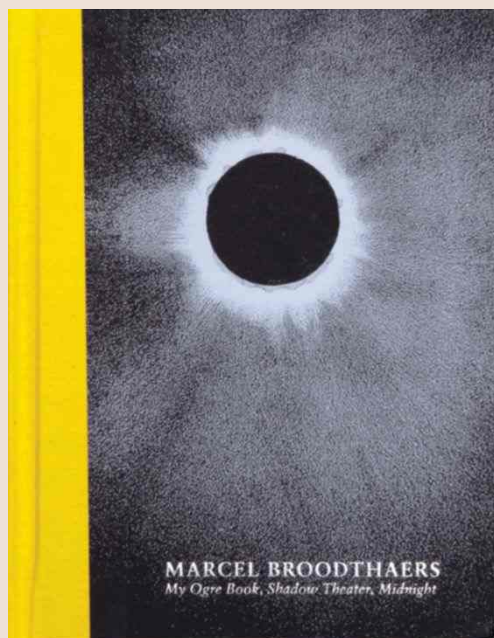
"BACK FROM LULLA-LAND" -- MEDIA: OIL ON CANVAS -- 65x53x2"

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## **“My Ogre Book, Shadow Theater, Midnight”**

**Marcel Broodthaers, (Siglio Press)**

Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers managed to excavate a unique poetic space within the realm of institutional critique, in a voice that was at once facile and sincere, and distinctly his own. Best known for his project *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (*Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles*) from 1968-1973, he helped set the stage for installation art. Rooted in a fascination with text, film and collage, blending words, found images and objects with a healthy dose of Surrealism, he was at once of his time and so ahead of it that it is easy to forget that he died in 1976. This winter (through May 15, 2016), the actual Museum of Modern Art in New York is giving the under-recognized artist his due with a much-anticipated retrospective. The modest but lovely book “My Ogre Book, Shadow Theater, Midnight,” by LA’s Siglio Press, is not meant to be a substitute for that sprawling exhibition, but can be savored on its own terms. The tidy hardbound volume gathers three bodies of work: two sets of Broodthaers’ poems (until 1964, he was primarily a poet), and “Shadow Theater,” a set of 80 slide images from 1973-74, that he used in his Projections. Drawing from such disparate sources as comic books, old prints, hand shadows, and snippets of text, (the found images veering from spewing volcanoes and other menacing natural phenomena to war, astronomy and scientific observation), the series is both haunting and amusing, and obliquely reflects themes from the earlier poems. Set together, they read like a cryptic storybook fable for adults, steeped in an almost Victorian sense of etiquette. Considering his interest in staking out a new vocabulary between idea and image, between cinematic and aesthetic space, the volume gives a nifty glimpse into the making of this influential artist’s singular perceptual alphabet. —GM

## **“Both Sides of Sunset: Photographing Los Angeles”**

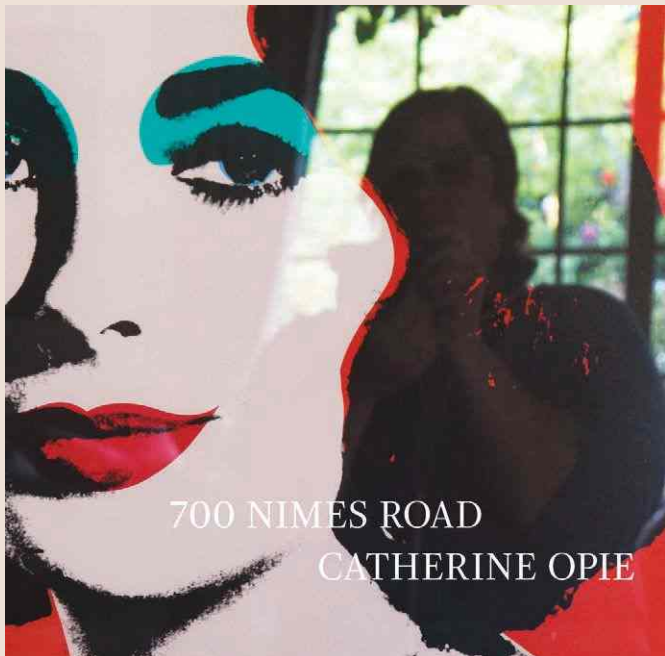
**Edited by Jane Brown and Marla Hamburg Kennedy, (Metropolis Books)**

Los Angeles is a city that seems often defined by its elusiveness. Beyond the iconic sites that beckon tourists, it fragments into a kaleidoscope of unlikely juxtapositions—a mirage of promise endlessly receding into a parade of palm trees and tacky-tack, studios and mini-malls, sunshine and noir, glitz and glare.

“Both Sides of Sunset: Photographing Los Angeles” thus defies expectations in capturing the texture of this vast suburban metropolis. Edited by Jane Brown and Marla Hamburg Kennedy, its ample pages feature imagery from over 125 photographers of diverse styles (and generations), along with knowing essays by artist Ed Ruscha, who once chronicled every building on the Sunset Strip, and writer David L. Ulin, “to evoke LA in all its contradictory glory.” LA is a city of a thousand different neighborhoods and moods, and the book wisely echoes that non-hierarchical layout. The early years are evoked by figures such as Julius Shulman, Marvin Rand, Denise Scott Brown, and Dennis Hopper, while contemporary artists such as Zoe Crosher, Todd Hido, Mark Ruwedel, and Amir Zaki lend their own eerie spin to today’s familiar vistas. We get

acrid street riots and desolate palaces. Garage doors by John Divola, signage by John Humble. A patterned concrete wall by James Welling. A wizened Chet Baker, a glowing Eva Mendes; Venice beach bums and Hollywood wanna-bes. Trees grasping at sunlight in various improbable forms. Whether it’s a lone cougar stalking the Hollywood Hills, or the 1967 picture of Dr. Zaius from “Planet of the Apes” seated at a bus stop amid Google architecture with a looming rocket and a giant donut, the volume palpably documents the banal but haunting Surrealism that permeates this Southern California dream capital. By the time the city recedes into the smog at the book’s end, numerous shots will linger long afterward. —GM





## Catherine Opie: "700 Nimes Road" (Delmonico Books/Prestel)

There's a hint of voyeurism à la "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," and the slightly self-conscious tenor of an ultra-cool Instagram feed in Catherine Opie's new book—129 sumptuous full-page plates set in a simple, clean design in which all the lavishness is reserved for the contents of images themselves. Which is to say, all the contents of Elizabeth Taylor's house. It is an exercise in portraiture by other means, what Hilton Als calls in his essay for the book, "totems to aura." Taylor died mid-way through the six-month project; the women never met. Inspired by William Eggleston's Graceland photos taken a few years after the singer's death, Opie's premise was straightforward: to create an intimate, accurate portrait of a person through their home and possessions. As a portraitist, the iconically frank style Opie favors doesn't work quite as well without a physiognomy to read; and despite the close-ups, tilt shifts, and the play of texture and ambient light, a book like this will always feel like an inventory. Yet there's a resonant personal charm to these intuitively culled details: pink satin pillows, Michael Jackson's photo on a bedside table, Taylor's Warhol portrait, scarves, purses, Oscars. An array of kitsch and elegance, random souvenirs and ballet shoes; endless white shag carpet and lights in the trees, and so very, very many diamonds. Selections are on view at MOCA/PDC through May 8, but as far more than a catalogue, this project lends itself to book form, where it can be seen in its entirety and less dramatic images can create an atmosphere of nuance. As Ingrid Sischy notes in her essay,

there is no hierarchy among objects on either Taylor or Opie's part; enacting what Opie calls "a democracy of glamour." In other words, it looked like anyone's house would, after being lived in for decades—which is ultimately the humanistic and conceptual success of the project. It's just that Taylor's stuff was better. —SND

## "George Herms: The River Book" (Hamilton Press)

One of the most seminal California assemblage artists, George Herms is known as much for his persona as for any specific artworks. To a younger generation, he may be best recognized as that older, beatnik-type dude who does outlandish musical performances; in 2011, invited to help usher in the six-month panoply of Getty-sponsored PST exhibitions, Herms ascended the stage with cardboard guitar, chimes and horn to lend his oracular invocation. So a rediscovery of Herms is probably past due. The hefty two-volume set titled "George Herms: The River Book," published by Hamilton Press, amply fits the bill. Comprehensive in scope and handsomely produced, with a fond intro essay by Dave Hickey, no less, the slip-cased, hardbound set offers an immersion into Herms' world. The plentiful B&W and color images of Herms' works are a revelation, accentuating their every scavenged nuance and frayed surface.

Although sculptural in form, Hickey places Herms' oeuvre at the junction of jazz and poetry; curator Walter Hopps put him in league with Schwitters and Duchamp. But it is the wealth of personal, archival imagery that sets the project apart. Friends and at times collaborators with Wallace Berman, Robert Alexander, Diane di Prima, poet Michael McClure, dancer Fred Herko, and others, Herms traversed California from San Francisco and Larkspur up north, to Hermosa Beach and Topanga Canyon down south, bringing his Beat sensibility to LA. The trove of photos presents Herms in his Pan-like element, amid burbling streams and tall grasses, among playful friends and shaggy kids and pregnant lovers, offering a window into the lifestyle that engendered his creative muse. As Hickey notes, Herms remains "a willing participant in that fraternity of kindred spirits and poetic optimists whose ebullience has defined ground zero for artists in California for the last half century." That California, too, has long since lost its innocence, but for a few True Believers like Herms; this lovingly assembled tribute makes the case for its staying power. —GM



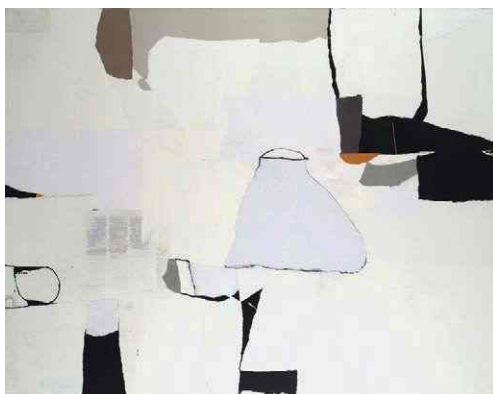




**APR 17 – AUG 28**

**WHAT:** "Puja and Piety: Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist Art from the Indian Sub-continent" is the first exhibition in North America to celebrate the diversity of South Asian art by examining the relationship between aesthetic expression and the devotional practice, or puja, in the three native religions of the Indian subcontinent. Drawn primarily from SBMA's permanent collection and augmented by loans from regional, private lenders, the exhibition presents more than 160 objects of diverse medium created over the past two millennia for temples, home worship, festivals, and roadside shrines.

**WHERE:** Santa Barbara Museum of Art  
**INFO:** [www.sbma.net](http://www.sbma.net)



**MAR 3 – APR 16**

**WHAT:** SLATE contemporary gallery may be best known for colorful abstract expressionism, but its "minimal" exhibition is an expression of an expansive sense of time and space. It is challenging too because we are so used to the constant onslaught of stimulating images that we are ill-equipped to simply stand in front of a white picture and wait to see what emerges. Works by Edith Bresnahan, Jane Grimm, Sylvia Poloto, Tressa Pack, and Lucky Rapp present shifts in tone that are so subtle that they can only be seen, much less appreciated, in person by standing in front of the art object.

**WHERE:** SLATE contemporary, Oakland  
**INFO:** [www.slatecontemporary.com](http://www.slatecontemporary.com)



**THRU MARCH**

**WHAT:** "Bones: New Works by Ralph Ziman"

Ziman's second solo exhibition with the gallery, Bones will feature a series of photographs and sculptures that directly respond to the current state of trophy hunting in South Africa and the resultant commercial exchange that occurs between South Africa and America.

**WHERE:** C.A.V.E. Gallery, Venice, CA  
**INFO:** [www.cavegallery.net](http://www.cavegallery.net)

**MAR 3 – APR 2**

**WHAT:** Victor Hugo Zayas in "El Rio" features paintings from his "L.A. River" series which document the changing landscape of the L.A. River over a period of 30 years plus the "Grid" series which addresses the interconnection among people and the overlapping paths that remain behind like scent trails.

**WHERE:** Abmeyer + Wood Fine Art, Seattle  
**INFO:** [www.abmeyerwood.com](http://www.abmeyerwood.com)



**THRU APR 23**

**WHAT:** A trio of exhibitions featuring works by renowned figurative artist Alex Katz: "Present Tense," a survey of sixty years of master drawings on view at Richard Gray Gallery in Chicago and New York, as well as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (thru Jun 26).

**WHERE:** Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago/New York  
**INFO:** [www.richardgraygallery.com](http://www.richardgraygallery.com)

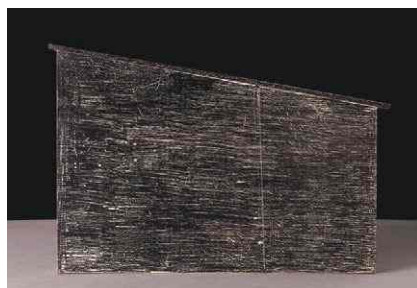


**THRU APR 2**

**WHAT:** Bruce Cohen's "Recent Paintings" of interiors and still lifes are in a word: captivating. Using slick oil and crisp imagery, his paintings toe the line between being pleasant and surreal. There is always something more than meets the eye; sometimes it's ominous thunderclouds serving as a backdrop to wholesome pink tulips, or flowers resting curiously on the floor while a 3/4-full glass of water occupies an otherwise empty table - suggestive of the human presence, yet a figure never graces his scenes.

**WHERE:** Leslie Sacks Gallery, Santa Monica

**INFO:** [www.lesliesacks.com](http://www.lesliesacks.com)

**THRU MAR 26**

**WHAT:** For more than a decade, Ross Sawyers has produced photographs that focus on subtle and important aspects of urban architecture. His last exhibition at Platform referenced interior spaces. The latest body of work "The Jungle" focuses on exteriors, some seemingly constructed with materials at hand, some perhaps existing structures that have been altered; more symbols of habitats than anything inhabitable.

**WHERE:** Platform Gallery, Seattle

**INFO:** [www.platformgallery.com](http://www.platformgallery.com)

**THRU JUL 10**

**WHAT:** "Into the Night: Modern and Contemporary Art and the Nocturne Tradition" examines the long tradition of the nocturne in art and how that tradition has expanded to encompass various ways that contemporary artists consider the enigmatic notion of the night. This exhibition is comprised of paintings, photographs, and works on paper that investigate the psychological concepts of darkness, the dreamscape and its connection to the night, and the inter-connectedness of the environment with cultural and artistic discourse.

**WHERE:** Tucson Museum of Art

**INFO:** [www.tucsonmuseumofart.org](http://www.tucsonmuseumofart.org)

**THRU MAY 1**

**WHAT:** Internationally acclaimed artist Ai Weiwei's "Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads" bronze series reinterprets the sculptures that once adorned the famed 18th-century fountain-clock of the Yuanming Yuan (Old Summer Palace), an imperial retreat outside Beijing. The heads were pillaged when the place was ransacked by French and British troops in 1860. Ai Weiwei focuses attention on issues of repatriation while extending his ongoing exploration of what constitutes Chinese art and identity.

**WHERE:** Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento

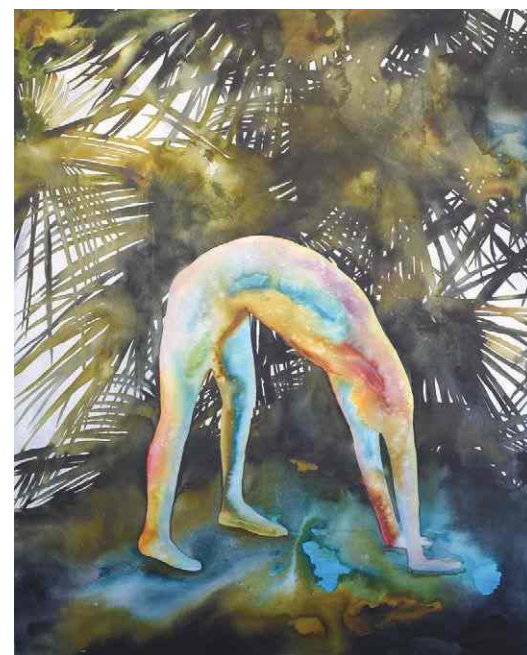
**INFO:** [www.crockerartmuseum.org](http://www.crockerartmuseum.org)

**MAR 1 – APR 2**

**WHAT:** Tom Prochaska in "Balumes" engages in playful abstraction through liftground etching, creating ambiguous, earthy Rorschach-like blots ripe with emergent imagery. Sarah Horowitz in "Lepidoptera" calls attention to the striking aesthetic and behavioral traits of a variety of moth species in delicate line etchings.

**WHERE:** Froelick Gallery, Portland

**INFO:** [www.froelickgallery.com](http://www.froelickgallery.com)

**MAR 18 – APR 30**

**WHAT:** "Metagalactic" brings together a body of work that relies on the aesthetics of outer space to explore themes about vastness, infinitude, mystery, relationship with and exploration into the unknown. Artists include Michelle Blade, Ala Ebtakar, Tobias Fike, Cameron Gainer, Paul Jacobsen, Becca Mann, Chris Oatey, and DJ Spooky.

**WHERE:** David B. Smith Gallery, Denver

**INFO:** [www.davidbsmithgallery.com](http://www.davidbsmithgallery.com)



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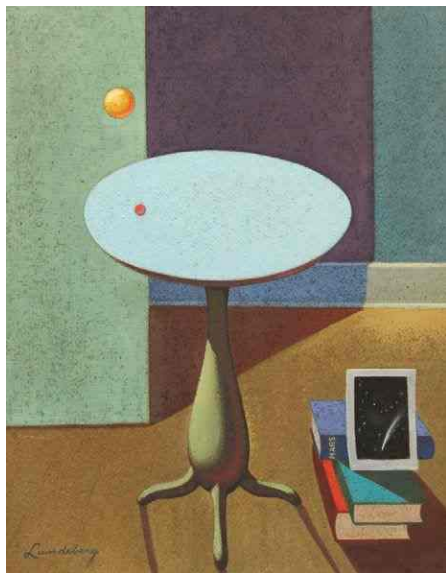
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The reopening of the David Ireland House at 500 Capp Street casts a spotlight on the life and practice of this pivotal SF figure who made an art form out of ordinary, everyday processes.

## HELEN LUNDEBERG

A founder of the post-Surrealist movement along with husband Lorser Feitelson, the SoCal painter was closely affiliated with Hard Edge abstraction, and a major figure in her own right.

## ART + TECHNOLOGY

Pace launches its new Art + Technology space in Menlo Park, CA with the Japanese collective teamLab, whose immersive artwork explores the confluence of technology, design and nature.

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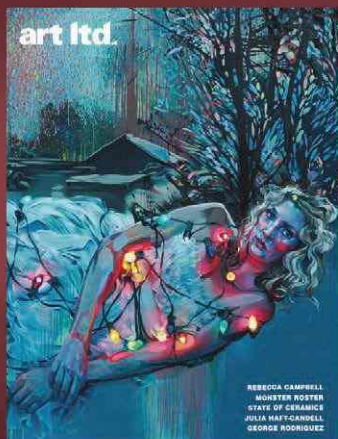
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Bella Feldman sculpture

Nancy Genn painting

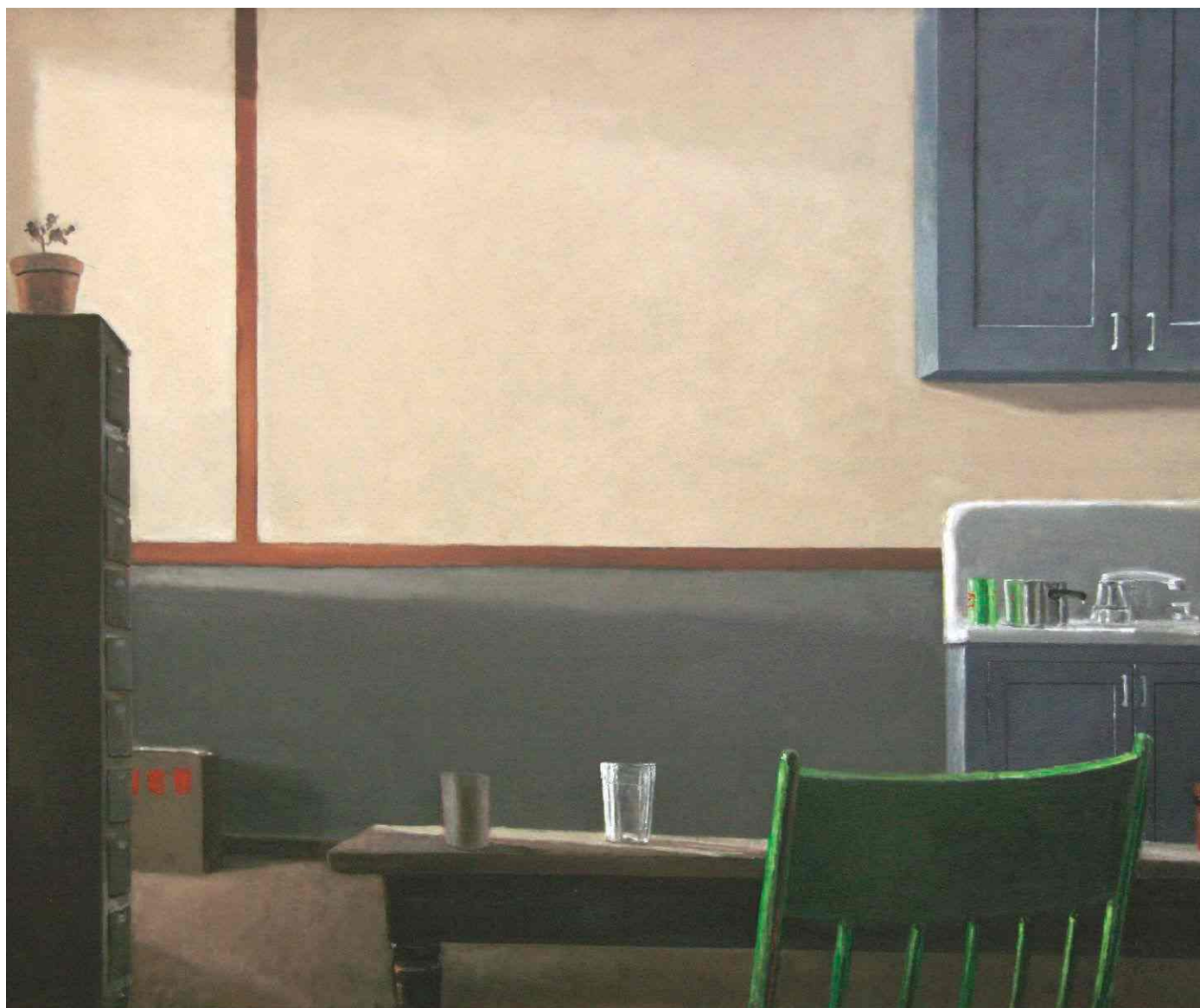
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Norman Lundin, *KITCHEN WITH GREEN CHAIR*, 2015, oil on canvas, 40 x 48 inches

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